Enter into thy Closet:

OR, A

METHOD

AND

ORDER

FOR PRIVATE

DEVOTION

OF THE

LORDS SUPPER.

Revised by the Author.

Is not this a brand pluckt out of the fire? Zech. 3. 2.

London, Printed for *T. Sawbridge* in *Little Britain*, *R. Bentley* in *Covent-Garden*, and *G. Wells* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, 1684.

Sold by Io: Martyn at ye Bell in S^t. Paul's C. Yard

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TO THE

Right Reverend Father in God,

SETH

Lord Biſhop of *Sarum.*

My very good Lord,

HE *who writ this, though for many reaſons he deſired the World ſhould be ignorant of him, yet could not content himſelf, it ſhould be ignorant it very much owes to your Lordſhip both him, whoever he is, and this his Book, whatever it is:* Him, *in the care you have ever expreſt towards him; and* it, *in that ſome diſcourſe of yours, though but caſual at Table, gave*

A *occaſion*

occaſion to its compoſure (for the main,) and publication: Being publick, and having often now ſeen the light, it almoſt flatters its Author into an apprehenſion, That if the World continue in the little Sobriety and Devotion, which (alas!) a ſmall part thereof at preſent wears, it may chance to live the longeſt of any thing he may do. At leaſt he begs you'l think, when he inſcrib'd it to you, that he thought it might: However, ſhould he ever be bleſt with marble, he aſſures you 'twill not ſuffice him, that he hath writ your Name in water. God preſerve your Lordſhip, what you truly are, an Ornament *to your* Age *and* Country, *a* Bleſſing *to his* Church, *and a* Refuge *to the* ſoberly Religious.

A N

AN ADMONITION TO THE READER.

As it ſtood in the former Editions.

WHat it is the faſhion to call an *Epiſtle to the Reader*, or, if it be ſomewhat longer, a *Preface*, the Author ſtiled an *Admonition*, or *Advertiſement to the Reader*, that by a more unuſual title he might the more ſurely

draw him to read it, before he doth the Book.

And the first thing which he admoniſheth thee of, Good Reader, is, that thou neither queſtion nor ſcruple what judgment he is of, before thou haſt conſidered what he here ſaith: nor that, when thou ſhalt have read a little way into the book, thou make ſuch conjectures of its Authors opinion, as to conclude the book fit only to be laid aſide by thee, becauſe he who writ it, may haply diſſent from thee in ſome matters. He very little meddles with

any matters here, in which it is likely that any ſober Chriſtian diſſents from him. A diſreliſhing expreſſion, or a Chapter ſhould not be warrant enough to thee for thy ſentencing him this or that, and rejecting what elſe he ſays for thine and common good. Perhaps he may make mention of a *Common-prayer-Book*, or *Holy-days*, only to draw in them, who will hear of no devotion which reſects theſe, (but execrate it ſtill as *Fanatical*) to the reading his Book, and thereby to a more ſerious

and Chriſtian uſe of thoſe things, than what all are guilty of. Perhaps on the other ſide, he may be in good earneſt, and thinking them right Chriſtian and uſeful, commend them to thy practice, and direct thee ſo to uſe them, as that thou ſhalt by ſuch uſe of them begin leſs to quarrel with them. Either deſign is honeſt, and it is, no matter whether it is which he hath, nor who, or what he is. He would only have thee to take him for a man of ſerious and ſober Principles, and one who would have

have all that profeſs Chriſtianity to be ſuch alſo: (and ſuch thou muſt either take him to be, or elſe, being that thou knoweſt him not, and ſo canſt not know him to be otherwiſe, thou art uncharitable:) and as being ſuch, that, which he endeavours here is to bring thee ſeriouſly upon thy knees before God, there to examin thine heart and actions according to that Chriſtian Rule which indiſpenſably enjoyns thee Charity, Meekneſs, Moderation, Peaceableneſs, and ſuch ſweet

Virtues; which if thou do but uſe thy ſelf to, thou wilt judge thy ſelf no otherwiſe a Chriſtian than as theſe Chriſtian Graces are in thee, and receive as a new-born-Babe, the ſincere milk of the doctrine of Godlineſs, come it to thee in what veſſels ſoever.

Another thing, which he hath to adviſe thee of, is matter of direction in the uſe of this Book: in which caſe his deſire to thee is, that thou wilt firſt read over the Tables, which are annexed to it, and mark the ſubſtance of

of what he there promiſeth to treat of: That then, if thou reſolve to make uſe of this method for thy devotion (and, the Author thinks thou wilt, if thou have the patience to conſider it, and canſt obtain leiſure of thy ſelf to practiſe it) that thou wilt read the Book once or twice over, and endeavour by attent conſideration to underſtand it; and when thou haſt once got the Book thus into thine head, the practice will ſoon grow eaſie (he is ſure, at leaſt, moſt ſweet

and bleſſedly delightful.) Be but perſwaded to try it one month or two, and ſee if thou canſt find in thy heart to be ſo injurious to thine own felicity, as to lay it aſide again.

Somewhat too there ſhould be ſaid as to what is likely to be objected againſt the contents hereof. It may haply be conceived there are here ſome practices directed to in ordinary devotions, which are too high for every mans reach (as is meditating upon Scripture, in ſuch ſort as is here taught, endea-

endeavouring the mortification of ſin in ſuch rational Methods, *&c.*) ſome circumſtances too, as to the place of retirement, unneceſſary, or above many mens conditions, *&c.* As to the former of which, the Authors anſwer is, that patterns of this nature muſt not be ſet too low, for that men are apt rather to aim under than over; that he thinks there is very little of practice here, by which a plain capacity may not underſtand ſomewhat, which he will conclude to be his duty,

duty, though it may be he reach not all in that caſe; and further both as to this and to the latter point ſuppoſed to be objected, that the higher matters and more curious circumſtances are commended only to men of abilities, eſtates and leiſure ſuitable: Let all go as high as they can, and their devotions will be ſure to be more compleat, than if they had aimed Lower.

Now, which is all that ſhall be added, poſſibly ſome may think ſuch

Books

Books as theſe needleſs at preſent, after ſo many extant in this kind already. Hereunto the Authors Apology might be, that the number of ſuch Books is much at preſent leſſened by thoſe * mercyleſs flames out of which the providence of God ſaved this Book, (when it was in a manner all printed off ſave this Preface) that this preſervation of it is ſome excuſe for its appearance, and preſage that it may not be altogether fruitleſs: But this being waved, that which was his

* *The dreadful fire of* London. *September* 1666.

his anſwer in the Preface; which thoſe forementioned flames conſumed, when the Book it ſelf eſcaped, is, that he is not much read in Engliſh Books of this kind, and ſo knows not what or how many like are extant; but that of thoſe, which it hath been his lot to ſee, he knows none, which do more aim at the hitting the *genius* and humour of every mans devotion (be he of what judgment he will) than he hath done in this and that, be the Reader a conformable perſon,

or

or any of the contrary perſwaſions, if he be but ſerious, and reſolved not to reject the main, which he cannot but approve, for a page or two, which though he may not much brook, yet he can ſcarce be very angry with, the Author believes ſuch a perſon will not think his pains to no purpoſe: However that in this hope he cannot but be confident, that the meer writing and publiſhing hereof will be a perpetual engagement to himſelf of a more ſtrict and circum-

ſpect

ſpect life, as well as of more mature, regular and conſtant devotion; and that therefore, if in none other, yet in this reſpect, it comes not forth in vain. To which purpoſe he deſires thee (good Reader) to help him with thy Prayers, as he hath endeavoured to help thee by the following advise.

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Enter

The Table

Enter into thy Closet.

OR, A

METHOD

FOR

PRIVATE DEVOTION.

Part I. CHAP. I.

Of the neceſſity of Privacy, and thoſe Chriſtian Duties which require it.

THat perſon can no wiſe be eſteemed a ſerious and thorow Chriſtian, uprightly and cordially diſcharging his duty towards God, who is a ſtranger unto privacy, and uſeth not to withdraw himſelf from company, even the company of his neareſt friends, often preſenting himſelf *alone* before

Part. I. Chap. I.

God: For that, besides the worship of God, which we perform to him in the *Publick Assemblies*, and joyntly with the rest of the *Family*, of which we are members, besides, I say, praying, hearing, and receiving, *&c.* in the Church, and praying with the people of our own house, there are several religious duties to be performed by us, without which the power of godliness can never be kept alive in our hearts, nor the service, which before or with others we do unto God Almighty, be hearty, mature, and compleat; which duties can never be performed as they should be, if we are in company. To wit,

First, It is indispensably necessary, that a Christian often *examine himself*, take account of his own *state* and *actions*, whether his heart be so stedfast in holy purposes as it has been, or ought to be, or as he hath vowed to God it should be: whether his practices of late have been answerable to such resolutions and engagements, as he hath made: or whether his *heart* be more indifferent and

careleſs than it was, and his *actions* more looſe and irregular: This, I ſay, is abſolutely neceſſary to an holy life; for that without it, he may inſenſibly go back and grow worſe, he may delay his returns unto God, or not return after ſeveral wandrings, and (if ſuddenly catcht) die without the particular repentance of many ſins.

Secondly, It is as neceſſary, that a Chriſtian *confeſs himſelf* to Almighty God; that is, that having taken ſuch an account of his wandrings, he acknowledge them, bewail them, and beg pardon of them before God.

Thirdly, Becauſe *repentance* cannot be without *reformation*, it is neceſſary, that he *conſult and conſider* with himſelf *how he may grow better*; what *occaſions of* his *ſins* there were, which may be avoided; what *means* of the *contrary virtues*, which may be uſed, and *reſolve* ſeriouſly with himſelf, that theſe and theſe occaſions he will avoid, theſe and theſe means uſe.

Now foraſmuch as ſuch *reſoluti-*

Part. I. Chap. 1.

ons can never be *upright* and firm, except made with *deliberation*, heed and *thoughtfulneſs*; and foraſmuch as ſuch deliberation cannot be taken in company, nor all things duly weighed, where we have a crowd of occaſions and objects to take off our thoughts, it is therefore neceſſary that for ſuch work we be alone: and in the other caſes, becauſe that *examination of our ſelves* muſt needs be very *ſleighty* and *ſhort*, which we make while we ſit and talk with others; becauſe alſo thoſe *confeſſions*, which we make in publick or with others, may be, and moſt frequently are, too *general* to reach our particular caſe and ſins, it is therefore neceſſary for the doing of them alſo, that we retire or go alone.

And to conclude, becauſe he, that would keep himſelf cloſe to the waies of holineſs, muſt do all theſe things *often*; it is therefore neceſſary, that he be *often alone*, at leaſt as often as with any tolerable convenience he can; and to that purpoſe, if his condition admit or will afford

afford it, that he have a place convenient to retire to, which we will call a *Closet*.

CHAP. II.

Of the Situation and Furniture of their Closet, who have choice.

NOW (it being supposed that my condition allows me so much choice, as that I might have it so) my *Closet* would I have no *unpleasant place*, as sweetly situated as any place of my house, that I might delight to be therein, and by no means a low or darksome room, but as high as I well could: for that so it will be most remote from the noise, company, and disturbance of the people, who are busied usually below; and besides that, some secret Property there is in such high and eminent places, whence we may behold the heavens and over-look the earth, which (to me) much raiseth the soul and elevates the affections,

Part 1. Chap. 2.

as if we derived or partaked more from Heaven, by how much nearer we come to it. Our *Saviour* therefore uſed to go up *into a Mountain to pray*: and St. *Peter went up upon the houſe* for the ſame purpoſe, that is, probably into an upper room, ſuch as the *Diſciples* were aſſembled in. And if it might be, my paſſage thereunto ſhould be through two other outer rooms, at leaſt through one, the door or doors of which I might ever have ſhut, when I thither retired, to the end that my voice, which many times I ſhall have occaſion, for my own quickening, to uſe, might not be heard without.

Acts 10. 9. Acts 1. 13. and 20. 8.

The *Furniture* of my *Cloſet* I would have a little more, than that of *Eliſha*'s Chamber, *A Table, a Stool, and a Candleſtick*: and inſtead of his Bed an hard *Couch*, or great Chair, on which I might ſometimes lean my weary or aching head: But a Couch the rather, for that ſometimes I haply might find it neceſſary to ſpend the whole night there, and might thereon take ſome repoſe. To theſe I would add a *Bible, a Com-*

2 Kings 4. 10.

mon-

mon-Prayer-book, two *Paper-books* (which when filled must be supplied by two others) and a *Pen* and *Ink*. Another Book or two (of which hereafter) I may also see occasion to add to these. A *Chimney*, against Winter's cold, to make the place endurable, if need be, a whole night, would be no contemptible convenience. If besides these, I there keep any thing, as Students do Books, Gentlemen Writings, and Ladies Medicines, *&c.* all these I would have placed on one side, or at least, one side I would have free from them, against which should either stand a Table, or a *praying Desk* (that when occasion should be, I might lay a Book or Paper before me) and the wall over such Desk or Table should be hung (if I were able to do it) with some stuff, of one colour, (Green the best for the eyes sake) to the end that, when there kneeling at my Prayers, I might have in mine eye nothing to call away or divert my thoughts.

To any man, whose Genius this proposal suits not with, I offer that practice of *Daniel* (*ch.* 6. 10.) who

Part I. Chap. 3.

opening his window or caſement kneeled down with his face thitherward and prayed. By this means, the mind, by the ſight of the viſible heavens, is carried in its thoughts into the inviſible, and more ſtrongly contemplates and adores the Creator of all, there dwelling. But this is only practicable in the Country, or places of great privacy, and not at all ſeaſons, becauſe of the injuries of weather. I therefore prefer the other at leaſt for conſtancy: both may be uſed in ſeaſon.

CHAP. III.

Of moſt Common entrance into the Cloſet.

MY *Cloſet* being thus *fitted*, it is ſuppoſed that my recourſe thereto is either more or leſs ſolemn. At no time (except upon moſt earneſt and haſty occaſions) ſhould my entrance thereto want the ſolemnity of a *ſhort* (but hearty) *Prayer*. For this being a place principally deſigned

designed for my devout retirement, and the performance of those private acts of worship which I owe to God, it becomes, by this its end and designment, after a sort separate or sacred, a certain *secret Chappel for my self*; and may not therefore wantonly or slightly be by me entred into. I say, not by *Me*: for what ever it is to others, to me ought it to be reverend. As therefore, when our ordinary occasions call us into (or through) Churches, we usually out of reverence to him, to whom those places are devoted, and in memory of those spiritual feasts, which we or our Christian brethren have there and in such places tasted, fall down on our knees and worship God, begging his blessing upon us and his people (as often as there assembled) and praising him for the benefits which we or his people have there partaken of; so when I come, though upon common matters, into my closet, yet considering with my self, that I am now in that place, wherein I have so often worshipped (or at least

Part I. Chap. 3.

reſolved often to worſhip) God, and had ſweet converſe with him, in memory thereof, and for reaſons hereafter mentioned, I would kneel down and pray, to this or the like effect.

MY good God, whom I here frequently and with my heart worſhip: bleſs me, I beſeech thee, in the affairs I go about. Keep my heart with thee, at leaſt ever keep it upright before thee: And as often as I here preſent my ſelf, let thy good Spirit be preſent with me, to diſpoſe me unto, and aſſiſt me in thy ſervice, through Jeſus Chriſt my Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

And having thus or otherwiſe, as I am able, or have opportunity, prayed, I would forthwith apply my ſelf to what I intended.

Now ſuch courſe obſerved, as often as I enter my *Cloſet*, will be many

many wayes advantageous to me: *First*, it will be a means to keep my heart much with God, and to recal it to him, in case my thoughts have too much wandred from him. It will make me spiritual in ordinary matters and converse. *Secondly*, it may be a means to procure a blessing upon my undertakings. *Thirdly*, I may the better expect God's presence there, when I come purposely to seek him.

It needs not, after this discourse, to admonish, that we ever take heed what matters here we do. I would not choose this as a place of my vainer discourse, or free hours, as some do, who are ever severest in company, and allow themselves liberty in private, or amongst their Confidents, whom if they can but get into such a place, where neither mens eye, nor ear can reach them, (as the Closet for the main is supposed to be) their company shall be vain and frolick, to as high a degree almost as any mens. *I take it, (and I am greatly deceived, if I mistake it) for a certain argument, that the*

Part. I. Chap. 3.

the serious belief of a God, and of the World to come, is much waning in his heart, who dare be naught, idle, or sinfully merry, if he can but get out of men's sight and cognizance.

PART.

PART II.

Treating of *Daily Closet Duties.*

CHAP. I.

That, if I am a person of leisure, I ought daily, twice in the day, to retire into my Closet *for devotion's sake.*

IT followeth now to be considered of more *solemn retirement* or entrance into the *Closet.* Now that I account a solemn recourse thither, when my business there is purely devotion. And such recourse is either *ordinary*, or more *special.* My ordinary retirement into my *Closet* should be daily; and that, if my

Part. II. Chap. I.

my condition will conveniently admit, as moſt mens may, twice a day: oftner I may, as at noon, ſeldomer I well cannot.

I am bound thereto upon the ſame grounds, upon which I am bound to pray twice a day: and the ſum of them is, that the command ſaith, *Pray continually*; the meaning of which we cannot but take to

(1.) be, (1.) either pray alwaies when you may for other duties (that is, ſo much time as thou canſt ſpare from the work of thy calling, and due care of thy body, and other offices of Charity and Piety, ſpend in

(2.) that duty of prayer): or elſe (2.) (parallel to that of the *continual burnt offering*, which was called *Continual*, becauſe ever *continued* in its courſe twice a day) keep a continual courſe of prayer morning and evening. And this, the practices of the Saints in Scripture (which we may look upon as Exemplifications of that forenamed Command) to wit, the practice of *David*, praying *Evening, Morning, and at Noon*; of *Daniel*, as many times, and none that we

we read of leſs than twice, cannot but enforce upon us, as the leaſt which can be our duty in this caſe. Part II. Chap. I.

If any think they are excuſed from private prayer twice a day, by their praying twice a day with the Family, of which they are a part, they are to underſtand, that there is no particular ſtrict Command touching the nature of our daily devotions, preſcribing them to be either publick, or private, or both: but that it is moſt juſt and equitable, that *God ſhould have a liberal part of our time, as well as of our eſtates:* that therefore, if our condition be ſuch, as that beſides the time, which we ſpend in prayer with the Family (which no one, who would have God to bleſs his Family, can think he may neglect) we have convenient leiſure from other neceſſary matters, it cannot be better beſtowed, than in our *Cloſet*, and upon our *Souls*. And it will queſtionleſs be a piece of very ſinful vanity, to trifle it away, and omit what it might ſo well have been employed upon: According, as in matter of my

Pſal. 55. 7. Dan 6. 10.

Dr. Ham. Pract. Cat. Lib. 3. Sect. 2.

Part II. Chap. I.

my eſtate, if after ſufficient neceſſaries and conveniences provided for my ſelf and Family, there do yet remain in my hand a portion of what God hath given me, I cannot but look upon it as my Duty to ſupply therewith the neceſſities of thoſe who want; and as my ſin, for me idly to ſquander it away, which might have filled ſo many hungry bellies, or clothed ſo many naked or ragged backs. Further, God having injoyn'd me the duty of prayer, but left the particular frequency of it, after the nature of other free-will offerings, to my Chriſtian diſcretion, I ought not to be therefore the more heedleſs; but rather, becauſe I know my ſacrifice will be ever accepted, how often ſoever brought with an honeſt heart, out of an holy ambition of pleaſing God and ſending up an odour of a ſweet ſavour unto heaven, ought I to bring it as often as I can: And ſurely twice a day I may preſent even my private devotions.

If I be ſingle and in my own power, there is no queſtion but I may:

If

If I be the Master or Mistress of a Family, there is little question of it: If I be a servant, or one who works for my living, there is indeed somewhat the more question; for that not only I may be straitned in time, but want the conveniency of privacy; But yet even in this case, what hinders, but that, being I cannot do so well as I would, I may do as well as I can? To wit, rising one piece of an hour ordinarily sooner, or lying down so much later, fall down upon my knees by my self at my bed's side, and privately pour out my confessions and prayers before God. And what if my fellow servant be with me? Why should I be ashamed to do before him, what he cannot but acknowledg he also ought to do? Shall I not one day much more blush and be confounded at the omission of my duty, before *Men* and *Angels*, and *God* himself, than here at the performance of it? And which shame rather to be chosen? That, before God, all Men, Angels, Devils, than This, before one or two? That which

Part II. Chap. 2.

which is eternal, or This, which *after I have once or twice deſpiſed, I ſhall be troubled with no more*? That which hath a real ground in turpitude and ſin, or This which ariſeth only from a fooliſh baſhfulneſs? Begin to do ſo, and after the firſt or ſecond time thou wilt never be aſhamed of it: I aſſure thee at leaſt, thou wilt never repent.

This then ſhould be my *ordinary* retirement twice a day.

Our more *ſpecial* retirement ought to be upon *Lords days*, *Holy days*, and our own *private Faſt-days*, each of which will come hereafter to be conſidered. In the mean time our daily retirement and devotions muſt be proceeded with.

CHAP. II.

Conſiderations to perſwade to daily devotion and prayer in private.

AND to the end I may be ſure to keep ſuch courſe as before-ſaid,

ſaid, let me ſit down and ſeriouſly weigh,

Firſt, The *concernment*, *importance*, and vaſt moment of *thoſe things*, which by *prayer* I am to *ſeek* and may obtain, above the other, upon which moſt of my time is ſpent. What is it of worldly goods, which will not paſs away (at leaſt as to me, and my enjoyment of it) with my ſelf? I dying, all dies with me: my eſtate, my honours, my friends, and all ſuch, are no more comfortable to me, when death once appears; but happily a torment, being that they are all now to be left. It is therefore but to the end of my threeſcore years and ten (if I ſhould live ſo long) or thereabouts, that theſe can be good at all: And of theſe my threeſcore years and ten (which is a thouſand to one, whether ever I reach) how many are already gone? Perhaps one Moyety, perhaps more. So then, all thoſe things which my other time ſeeks, are of a pitiful, ſhort, and tranſient concernment. But the *grace of God's Spirit*, an *holy Heart*,

Part II. Chap. 2.

a *good Conſcience*, *Reconciliation* with my heavenly Father, theſe and ſuch like, are not only of concernment for my preſent happineſs, but for my eternal. The richeſt, honourableſt and moſt worldly-happy Man, if devoid of grace, an enemy unto God, conſcious to himſelf of Villany, cannot in all his abundance here enjoy or like himſelf, much leſs either account himſelf, or be accounted, an happy perſon. For what can that man acquieſce in, whoſe own heart calling him a rogue, lays a fatal neceſſity upon him to hate, and ever and anon to be ready to execrate, himſelf? Certainly there is no preſent poſſible happineſs, which is comparable to that bleſſed calm and quiet, which ariſeth from the ſenſe of a Man's own upright heart, and diſcharged duty. Inſomuch that were there no ſuch thing as an heaven to come, I ſhould not fear to pronounce, that that man neglects thoſe things which are of greateſt conducement to his preſent happineſs, who neglects to ſeek unto God, to commune with his own heart,

heart, to set all straight, and to reclaim himself to an holy Life, the great means by which such peace, the most real felicity in the world, can be had. But suppose we such a person ready to die, *and it said unto him, Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be taken from thee*; his peace being unmade with God, himself unacquainted with heaven, his conscience telling him, that all his time hath been spent upon what he must now leave, and no provision made (but of a *treasure of wrath against the day of wrath*) for that eternal state, into which death is his entrance; is he not now a most unhappy wretch? Is it not to him a pain equal to the pains of death to think he must leave all? Hath he not therefore, by devoting himself so to this world, and scraping together such an ample portion thereof, only made himself more miserable, and that in this present life? For is there any misery here, like to that anguish, which racks such a soul upon his now instant departure? And would I then so spend my time, as that

Part II. Chap. 2.

Luk. 12. 20.

Rom. 11 12.

Part II. Chap. 2.

that I might, by the ſpending of it, become at my departure more miſerable than any, ſave thoſe who have lived as I? Would I ſo ſpend it, as that the very thinking or reflecting, how I had ſpent it, ſhould then moſt torment me, when I have moſt need of comfort, to wit in my dying hour? And yet thus do all men ſpend their days, who neglect their devotions, or duties of daily addreſs unto God.

But further, ſuppoſe we ſuch a perſon dead, and we have him ſtript of all, even his imaginary happineſs, naked of every thing, ſave his ſins: Of theſe *his bones are full, and they ſhall lye down with him in the duſt*: His *works follow* him, and his *wages* meet him. Evident therefore it is, that what he hath ſpent his life upon, is now of no concernment or moment to him at all, any otherwiſe, than to render him for ever as miſerable as he can be. And is this a deſirable end, for a man all his daies to be driving at; to be miſerable *in life, by reaſon of an evil conſcience*, or an impoſſibility of liking

Job 20. 11.

king and loving himself; to be miserable in *death*, *by the advancing of that disquiet*, his former torment; and most miserable *after death by the perfection of* that and all other *mischiefs*? Whereas if some of those daies, (possibly hours) which the world employed, had been taken up in seeking unto God, how might that portion have sanctified all the rest, have led him to a right improvement of what he got, and that improvment of all been an unspeakable pleasure and content to him here, and hereafter have wrought him an eternity of blessedness? Not to mention that unspeakable satisfaction, which the hearty performance of such devotions, through the blood of Christ, would have filled him with, which we may hereafter consider. Whoso therefore truly *loves himself* will *love* his *Closet* and his *Prayers*.

Secondly, Let me weigh the *Reasonableness* hereof, that *God* should have a *considerable part* of my *Time* who hath given me *so much* for *my self*, and the *unreasonableness* of the con-

Part II. Chap. 2.

contrary. Let me deal ingenuously: may not God well expect more of my time, than what is by any law ſet apart or conſecrate to his worſhip? And it being the genuine Evangelical ſenſe of the fourth commandment, keep all thy life an *holy reſt from doing thy own works, delighting thy ſelf* and acquieſcing ever in *the Lord*, will it not in a good meaſure hold thus? Reſt as much as thou canſt to thy devotions, ſpend as many hours as thou canſt with God. Or ſuppoſe that this Law would not in equity bind me hereunto (which it ſeems to do) is it not reaſonable that there ſhould be free-will-offerings of our Time as well as of our Eſtates? and will there be any better way found for the employing of what we can ſpare thereof, than the thus ſanctifying and devoting it unto God? I am confident, whatever mens Practices may be, their Conſciences cannot gain-ſay, but do highly approve and commend to them, what is preſſed. We may complain fondly of the *ſhortneſs of time*; but evident it is that

Iſaiah 58. 13, 14.

that we *ſpend much* upon this world, much upon our gains, much upon our pleaſures, much upon our ambitions, much alſo upon thoſe neceſſary acts of life, eating, drinking, ſleeping, and much too upon (God knows) we know not what. Now let thoſe who account themſelves to have leaſt leiſure, find but time enough to conſider, when they go to bed every night, how much time they have loſt, or trifl'd away, that day, and ſetting it down every night, reckon at the weeks end, and ſee, to how many hours it will amount. Do ſo but one week, or two, and ſee if you do not bluſh at the ordinary excuſe for neglect of prayer, that you have not time. For the iſſue will be of theſe two, the one, either my whole time hath been really imployed, and that upon my common affairs and neceſſary care of my body; or elſe ſome part of it (to wit, ſo much as hath not been imployed) hath been trifled away. Now (*utrum horum*) let me take which I pleaſe. If it be ſuppoſed all to have been employed, is it not

Part. II. Chap. 2.

most unreasonable, that worldly business and my body should have all, and God and my soul have none, or next to none? Did God make me for himself, and allot me such a measure of time for his glory and for provision for my soul, and are they only some few minutes, which I can find either for him or it? Was, I say, every day given me for these ends, and can I spend all without considerable seeking either, as I do, if I allow nothing to private devotion? *Ought I not therefore to lessen my business, rather than neglect the great ends of my being?* If on the other side, a considerable part of my time were lost and trifled away, (as I dare say, infallibly it will appear upon due account taken) is not this a most unreasonable part in me, that I can find *time to lose*, and yet *no time to pray*?

And further, Thirdly, it may somewhat quicken me, if I consider, that though it should be questioned whether it be strictly my duty *thus and thus oft to pray*, because there may seem to be wanting an expres com-

command, yet I cannot but be sensible, that it is my duty *to pray, and to pray often*, (for this, there are not wanting commands) and that therefore prayer being a duty and well-pleasing unto God, the more thereof is performed, the more acceptable service do I do to God, provided prayer thrust not out my other duties: the frequency, I say, can never offend, except in the case of neglecting other duties to perform it: And herein commonly men are not apt to be guilty. Suppose it therefore not to offend in this case, being that it is a duty, it must please, and please the more, by how much it self is more frequent. Now this to ingenuity is no mean incentive to frequent prayer, that hereby I the more please my God, and delight heaven.

Fourthly, Let me consider, that as Prayer it self is the most powerful and effectual means that a Christian can use for the effecting of all he would, so there is no prayer more powerful than that which is most frequent and importunate. In

Part. II. Chap. 2.

general, as to the power of prayer, it is such that it seems to have done violence to Omnipotence it self, as in the case of *Moses*, when God, as though graciously held or restrained, bids him *let him alone:* and in some cases, if duly performed, God hath as it were allowed it to *command* him. But what or whose prayers are they, which are thus powerful? Surely not theirs, who so seldom come to heaven, that if it were for nothing else, but because they are such strangers, they would not speed; but theirs rather, whose daily and frequent application of themselves to the throne of grace hath rendered them there well acquainted and favourites. We may therefore observe, that *the most absolute and encouraging promises of being heard, are made to the importunate suitors.* The *widow* in the parable, whom injustice it self could not deny, was such; and therefore sped because such, because she came so often. And that precept, each gradation of which hath a promise proportionably attemperated and fitted

Exod. 32. 10.

Isai. 45. 2.

Luk. 13.

fitted thereunto, as it preſcribes, ſo chiefly encourageth *importunity*, that is, *frequency as well as fervency*. It is not ſaid, only *Ask*, nor only *Seek*, but both, and *Knock* beſides. The laſt alone, *viz.* Knocking, implies frequency, and therefore much more do all the three. And to the *Knocking*, as being of all the three the cleareſt denotation or expreſſion of Importunity, it is promiſed *It ſhall be opened*: as if it had been ſaid, thoſe who only *ask*, and *ſeek* may come to *ſpeed*, but thoſe who *knock*, thoſe who are oft and earneſt in their prayers, ſhall have the treaſures of heaven *opened and* free to them, out of which to take full ſatisfaction and ſupply.

Part. II. Chap. 2.

Mat. 7. 7.

Now becauſe all theſe things are ſo, therefore can it not be, but that the *benefit* of ſuch Practice muſt be *unſpeakable*, which, as another (and for the preſent, the laſt) incitement unto daily private devotion is worthy my conſideration. *Firſt*, as to the *inward temper* of my heart (which rightly to diſpoſe, and ſo diſpoſed to keep, is a matter of the greateſt

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greatest concernment to an holy life) there can be nothing thought of more effectual, than such practice, nor can it indeed well be conceived, how that man's heart can be kept in a thorow sense of his duty, and close with God, who maintains not some such daily course of devotion as is under present consideration.

1. The maintaining hereof will keep alive in me a continual fear and awful apprehension of God: It will habituate me in all my waies, often to think upon and remember him. Now *there is nothing, the apprehension of which is of more wholsom consequence unto a man, than of God, and his all-seeing eye.* One, who is sensible and mindful hereof, cannot be long vain; but, if he do forget himself at any time, will soon return to his old seriousness.

2. Such practice will also much conduce to the keeping of me humble, as being sensible of (because often minding) my sins: my sins, I say, from my youth up to my present years, my perpetual proneness and

and frequent relapses unto vitious courses. These, being matter of my daily confessions, thoughts, and meditations, cannot but in some good measure keep under any towring or proud conceits, which I am apt to have of my self.

3. It will also make and keep me tender, affectionate, and truly zealous in my service of God. There will be in me an habitual preparation for all duties; insomuch that I can no sooner be at them, and have engaged my self in them; but with a great deal of vivacity and readiness of Spirit, and with many inward meltings of heart I shall converse in them: this being not only my daily but my frequent practice, at least frequent endeavour.

4. It must therefore much increase all manner of Christian graces in my Soul; inasmuch as grace, according as we now speak thereof, is nothing else but the due disposition and bent of the Soul, which, as is evident, will be the natural consequent and fruit of such practice.

Secondly, It will have a very

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wholſom influence upon my life, as in all caſes elſe, ſo eſpecially in this, that I ſhall at no time carry on any deſign, which I dare not bring unto the teſt of heaven, and beg thereon the bleſſing of the God of Holineſs.

Laſtly, The mercies, which I receive in my own perſon, in my relations, in all my affairs, as procured and impetrated from God by theſe my daily and frequent prayers, will be innumerable; and that inward comfort and clearneſs of heart, with which I ſhall entertain and receive theſe mercies, or any thing elſe, which comes from the hand of my gracious God, inexpreſſible. The ſame mercies evidently are not the ſame to all men, no more than are the ſame chaſtiſements. But to whomſoever mercies are greater mercies, or afflictions leſs afflictions, it cannot be, but that to him, who thus conſcientiouſly daily converſeth with God, all muſt be moſt kindly.

Now the conſideration of all, which I have thus meditated, cannot ſure

sure but move me to some measure of diligence in these duties. If therefore at any time negligence begin to grow over me, it may be of good effect to *read over*, and duly to weigh these or the like motives, that I may he quickned to resume, and proceed with my proposed course: and what that course should be, it follows in the next place that I consult.

CHAP. III.

Of the Substance of every days private devotion; To persons of leisure, Reading, Meditation *and* Prayer.

THE *private devotion* of every day will be *different* to particular persons, according as their *conditions differ*. From such who are *servants* (or lead a servile life) I mean all those who get their living by their daily labour, whose abilities of mind are therefore meaner,

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and whose privacy more difficult) from such, I say, no more than this may seem to be expected, that both in the morning being risen, and at night being about to lie down, they in the fear of God fall down before him and pray unto him; touching which, directions will anon follow.

From *those*, whose *way of life* being *more liberal*, their abilities and opportunities are greater, more may seem justly to be looked for, according to that rule, *To whom much is given, from them shall much be required.* Speaking therefore to such who have estates and leisure, and so may have opportune privacy, I suppose their daily *privat devotion* cannot be *complete*, except consisting of *Reading*, *Meditation*, and *Prayer*.

Luk. 12. 48.

Touching *private Prayer* it hath been before spoken; and nothing now can by such, whom the present consultation concerneth, be said for the dispensing with it; being it is even their duty who are of meaner quality and capacity, and therefore much more theirs, who are of greater. Touching *Reading* and *Meditation*,

tation, if any ſuſpicion ariſe, it will eaſily be removed, (1.) by thoſe commands, which enjoyn us that we *Search* diligently *the Scriptures, that the word of God dwell plentifully in us*, &c. and (2.) by ſuch Characters of righteous perſons as that they are ſuch *whoſe delight is in the Law of the Lord*, and who *meditate therein day and night*. And certainly ſuch commands being capable to be intended or remitted (I mean being to be conſtrued with ſome regard, and) according to that general rule aforementioned (*to whom much is given, from him much ſhall be required*,) cannot but be interpreted to require greater and more diligent *Searching* (that is more of *Reading* and *Meditating* upon) Scripture, from thoſe, who have greater opportunity and ability to do it, than they do from others, who are meaner in both.

Part II. Chap. 3.

Joh. 5. 39. Ezdrav. Coloſſ. 3. 16.

Pſal. 1.

Of ſuch an one therefore, who hath not time every day, or if he haply have, yet cannot read, it may be thought he diſchargeth his duty of *ſearching the Scripture*, if in

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Part. II. Chap. 3.

a way proportionable to his ability, he endeavours to acquaint himſelf with Scripture, to wit, by a diligent attention to it, and inquiring of it (as he hath conveniency) when it is read or preached. But of ſuch an one, who can *read* and hath time to *meditate* on what he reads, and whom, it may be, it concerns to inſtruct others in the knowledge of Scripture (as being over them) of ſuch an one, I ſay, being that more is required, than of the other, it cannot in reaſon be thought, that he hath done his duty by bare attention unto Scripture read, except he himſelf read and meditate therein. And he will very hardly (we may not fear to ſay, not at all) approve himſelf to be a godly man, if he behave not himſelf as Godly men did of old, that is, if he *delight not in the Law of the Lord*, and therein *meditate* not daily. If I ſhould doubt therefore, whether it be ſtrictly my duty *day* and *night*, *morning* and *evening*, to read the Scriptures and meditate, I cannot doubt (for I ſee plain evidence for it) that it is a godly man's Character,

Character, one part of his practice as he is a godly man, to *read* and *meditate*: If therefore I intend to be a godly man, it must be my care and practice too.

Wherefore of these three *Reading*, *Meditation*, and *Prayer*, seeing that none may be well omitted (at least not ordinarily neglected) it is requisite more particular consideration be had.

CHAP. IV.

Of Reading the Holy Scripture, The most edifying method and manner of Reading it consulted of.

BY *Reading* here I understand reading the sole word of God: and this, as it should constantly (for the main at least, if not ever) have a place in my daily devotions in private, so therein, methinks, will most conveniently take place in the beginning of them, on this wise. Being entered into my *Closet* for my devotion's

Part. II. Chap. 4.

devotions ſake, it becomes me firſt in all humility and out of the fear of God, not out of cuſtom, to fall down before him, and in ſhort, according to former direction, to beg his bleſſing upon me, and preſence with me there preſenting my ſelf to worſhip before his Majeſty: To which purpoſe the Form, * already delivered, may be proper either for uſe or further direction, according as I ſhall ſee fit. This being done, forthwith let me apply my ſelf to the reading ſome portion of the word, according to my prefixed courſe. And what courſe ſhall that be?

*Part. 1. Chap. 3.

Modeſty would preſently anſwer, The ſame which the wiſdom of the *Church* hath *preſcribed* for publick uſe. And the truth is (the Church conſulting herein, as ſhe ought, the edification of the people) this order hath, in this point, the advantage of all other, that it will lead us to read over all the moſt uſeful parts of Scripture, and thoſe moſt frequently: to wit, the New Teſtament, excepting only ſome Chapters of the *Revelation*,

velation, three times a year; the *Psalms* once a month; the *Old* Testament (excepting only the two books of *Chronicles*, which are for the most part extant in the *Kings* and *Samuel*, and some other Chapters of other books, chiefly relating to the *Jewish* state) once in a year. But then if we consider its compliance with our present design, it hath these two exceptions lying against it. *First*, That the portions of Scripture, by that order to be read daily, are greater than what every man's, or most men's conveniency will afford time to read, meditate upon, and digest, as it is (supposed at present) best for a devout Christian to do. And then *Secondly*, That by this means a considerable part of the *Old* Testament, and some part of the *New* will be left out; which parts are not, questionless, without their use, though comparatively not so necessary for the publick Commonalty as the other. And to the *Churches prescription*, it may be said, that it was never the Churches intention to prescribe this order for mens *Clo-*

Part II. Chap. 4.

sets

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ſets in private, where ſhe can neither take notice of their obſerving nor neglecting it, but only for *publick edification* and *uniformity*.

This order therefore being taken not to be ſo proper for our preſent purpoſe, the next which will offer it ſelf, will be the *natural order* of the books *in which they lye*. Now this, though not liable to the exceptions, which we found againſt the former (being that nothing then will be omitted, nor the Reader overburdened with too great a portion, being he is left to himſelf) yet hath this *inconveniency*, that it will *detain* the obſerver of it a great while in thoſe *parts of Scripture*, which may *not edifie* him ſo much, as would the other: ſo that haply *Reading* ſhall be a *duller* and *leſs ſpiritual* an exerciſe, than it would be, did he more wiſely order it. Yet hath it this advantage alſo, that, the (*Revelations* of God and eternal life being ſtill *clearer* in each *ſucceeding part* of Scripture, I mean, clearer in the *Prophets* than in the *Law*, and in the *Goſpel* than in either) one month's reading

reading may make me ſee more into that of the former month, and all lead me to the magnifying of God for the preſent manifeſt Revelation of his will.

Theſe things being ſo, it may haply conduce moſt to our private edification, if we *keep ſtrictly to neither* of theſe orders, but obſerving the conveniences and inconveniences of each to our private purpoſe, according to our Chriſtian diſcretion frame to our ſelves one out of both, which may have the commodities of both, and incommodity of neither. And that may be ſuch as this, To begin every Reading with a *Pſalm*, or, where the *Pſalms* are very long, with a good portion of one, taking the *Pſalms* in their courſe: (This I therefore commend by reaſon of the exceeding *uſefulneſs* of that Book of *Pſalms* for prayer, it furniſhing a man with *petitions*, *hymns*, and *ejaculations* of all ſorts, and beſides *diſcovering* very much of the *hearty practice* of *Devotion* and *Godlineſs*.) That being finiſht, *in the morning*, to take in

Part II. Chap. 4.

in order, as the Books and Chapters lye, such a portion of the *Old* Testament, as my Christian prudence, considering my own conveniencies and occasions, shall judge fit: which, where the matter affords more work for *Meditation*, may be shorter; where less, larger. In like manner *at evening*, beginning with a like portion of the *Psalms*, take a part of the *New* Testament, as it lyes in order greater or less, according as before said, it finds my devotion work. Some such course as this would I observe, till I had read over the *Holy* Scripture *twice* or *thrice* with such care, attention and meditation, as shall presently be described; by which time I should begin to be a little vers'd in it, and to know what *parts of Scripture* I used to read with *greatest Christian advantage*, which therefore afterward, I would read *oftner* than the other, setting always a *mark* at the name of *each Book*, as they stand in the *Table* at the beginning of my Bible, when I had read that book over, that so I might know how often

Psalm. 25. 14.

I had read each, left I come too long to neglect the reading of any. This as to the *Order* of my *Reading*.

Having now my work thus orderly before me, it remains in the next place that I look to the best *manner* of doing it: whither belong the following rules.

First, That I endeavour to read with *compoſedneſs of mind* and *attention*, not only as to the *ſenſe*, ſubſtance, or ſubject matter of what I read, but as to the very *expreſſions of* it. For that the very expreſſions of Scripture are not only very uſeful in prayer (God loving to hear his children call upon him in his own language); but do alſo many times carry in them ſuch ſecret emphaſis and force, as ſhall much *comfort*, *ſupport*, *awe*, and otherwiſe *affect* the heart, which conſiders them.

Secondly, That I be ſure, as I read, to *obſerve the ſcope* and drift of that portion of Scripture, which I read. For as to particular paſſages, it may ſo happen that the plain Reader may many times ſcarce underſtand

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derſtand them, they puzling even learned heads; but as to the ſcope of the whole, as to that which the *Holy Ghoſt* chiefly drives at, this may be commonly more eaſily underſtood: and this being underſtood doth not only enſure me of ſo much benefit, as I have underſtood of it, but will give *ſpecial light* unto thoſe *darker places*, whoſe meaning I do not ſo well conceive.

Thirdly, That if ever I intend this part of my devotion, to wit my *Reading*, ſhould be acceptable to God, or otherwiſe than a witneſs againſt my ſelf, I reſolve upon the *impartial practice* of whatſoever I by reading find to be in Scripture commanded, and eſchewing of whatſoever I there find forbidden. Such godly purpoſe will increaſe my very knowledge; *For the ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will teach them his Statutes*: Whereas others, who bring not a reſolution of ſuch conſcientious practice, but barely inquiſitive diligence, may come to be in a greater meaſure ignorant of his mind.

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CHAP. V.

Of Meditation, and the most edifying course in it.

THese rules being thus observed, and a certain portion of *Holy* Scripture thus read, it will be proper for me in the next place to proceed to *Meditation*.

Now *Meditation* here I take not for the simple thinking of any thing divine, which shall offer it self, but for an *orderly and serious consideration* on the *particulars* following.

1. Upon that *portion of Scripture* which I have read.

2. Upon my *own state and ways*.

3. Upon the *prayers* (that is, Confessions, Petitions, and Thanksgivings) which I am presently to offer up unto God.

Touching the *first*, there are these three things for me to consider.

First, If I have not, as I read, been able to understand the *design* and *drift of the Holy Ghost* in what I have

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have read, let me consider touching that, and by a short review of what I have read, comparing the parts or several materials spoken of, & attending how they hang together, endeavour to comprehend their substance and scope. He reads to no purpose, who reads not thus; for it is not repeating the words of Scripture, but understanding and digesting their sense and substance, which is to be accounted reading the Scripture: and one Chapter thus read is worth ten hastily run over.

Secondly, If there be in what I have read any *difficulty* or *harder passage*, which seems to contain any *matter of practice* or *article of faith* (I mean which is likely to instruct me in any thing necessary to be believed or done in order to my salvation) That let me consider, and endeavour thereof to find the meaning. As to those difficulties, which concern controversies, that is, questionable Opinions in Divinity, or inquiries into matters of mere knowledge or speculation, (such things, which when they are known, there

there is an end of them) theſe may be very well over-look'd by an ordinary perſon. As for inſtance; Reading *Acts* 13. (the laſt Paragraph or partition of the Chapter, which begins *verſe* 44.) I find therein (*viz. verſe* 48.) a certain difficult expreſſion, *As many as were ordained unto life, believed.* What *believing* and what *life* (i. e. heaven or bleſſedneſs) mean, I know; but what *ordained* unto *life* means, I doubt; and truly need not much trouble my ſelf to inquire. Sufficient it is, that I conclude from thence, that *all they who ſhall obtain everlaſting life are believers* (not one unbelieving or ungodly perſon ſhall ever enter into heaven) and therefore particularly that I reſolve upon an honeſt cordial receiving of the Goſpel as my duty, if ever I intend for happineſs. Again, reading *Exodus* 32. I find, that *Moſes took the Calf they had made, and burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder.* How the burning Gold in the fire, which only purifies it ordinarily, ſhould come to make it friable or brittle, that

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that it might be ground unto powder, I need not ſtand to inquire. A ſhorter and better way it is, to believe the matter feaſible, and this relation true, as being part of God's word: all I need to conclude thence is, that *Idolatry is to be deſtroyed*, and that in ſuch ſort as the people may not return to it again, but rather *loath* and *abominate it*, as we do that which paſſeth through our bodies (for which reaſon *Moſes* made the people to drink of the powder of the Calf:)and that it is the wiſdom of Magiſtrates, whom it concerns to deſtroy it, as it was *Moſes*'s, to find out and contrive ſuch ways or methods of deſtroying it. This is, I ſay, as much as can concern any ordinary perſon: and as for the curioſity touched, it may ſafely be neglected. We give not rules to make a Divine, but to direct a Chriſtian. Now all ſuch difficulties and curioſities, being left out, I preſume the difficulties which ariſe in practicable matters will be but few. And for my help herein, it will be meet I reflect upon that which

which (according to the former rule) I found to be the ſcope or drift of that Scripture, and conſider the difficulty with ſome relation or regard thereto, obſerving the occaſion, upon which that expreſſion came in. This will help me very much many times. But for my further help therein, if I am able, it would be expedient I had ſome *ſhort gloſs*, or book explaining ſuch matters: and truly what Book to pitch upon, as beſt in this caſe, is not eaſie to reſolve. For I ſuppoſe there are not many books of notes or Commentaries upon the whole Bible in *Engliſh*, which medle only with neceſſary and practicable matters, omitting Controverſials, which a private Chriſtian, to his better edification, may well ſpare. For the *New* Teſtament I much admire Dr. *Hammond*'s Paraphraſe, and could ten thouſand times wiſh ſuch a piece were extant upon the whole Scripture. But yet it is too difficult for every plain Reader. Biſhop *Hall* hath a Paraphraſe upon the whole Bible, which comes much nearer to

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our present design: But I fear this is scarce. The frequentest, best, and most serviceable that I know, is *Diodate*'s *Annotations*: they have indeed a *Geneva tang* now and then, but pretty soberly. Some such book, according as I can get, I would furnish my self with, which I might consult touching the meaning of such difficult places as my Christian discretion should tell me to be practical, and for my necessary edification.

Thirdly, Having thus found out the design of that whole portion of Scripture which I have read, and the meaning of such particular Texts as I shall have occasion to search into, let me in my meditations cast over again, or recollect the substance of it, and consider *what am I the better for* the Reading hereof?

1. Am I instructed, or further confirmed, in any *matter of faith*?

2. Am I taught any *duty*, which before I either was *ignorant* of, or *neglected*? Do I here find any precept or *command*, which I never before took notice of, or had forgot, *&c.*

3. Is

3. Is there any thing which may *quicken* me to any duty, in which I am ſlack, or deter me from any ſin to which I am prone? Any *threatning* of Gods wrath? Any *example* of his Judgments? Any *promiſe* of mercy? Any *inſtance of bleſſings* on his diligent ſervants?

4. Is there any thing which may *ſtrengthen me in* any *temptation*, comfort me in any affliction, diſtreſs? *&c.*

5. Is there any particular *emphatical or affectionate ſpeech* which may at any time quicken me? Any proper *petition*, *confeſſion*, *invocation*, *thanksgiving*, or the like, which may be of uſe to me in prayer, or otherwiſe?

6. Is there any thing which I can obſerve of the *experiences* of holy men of old? Any thing of the deceitfulneſs of ſin? Any thing, whence I may learn better my own heart, either as to what it is, or what it ought to be?

Through ſuch heads as theſe may my meditations briefly run: which heads till I am perfect in, it may not

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be amiſs to open this my book, and examine what I have read, according to theſe directions laid down. And if I am able, I ſhall find it an incredible benefit, in the end of theſe my meditations to uſe my pen, whenſoever by any reading I have gained any more remarkable benefit, and to regiſter in one of my Paper books (reſerved ever for this purpoſe, which for diſtinctions ſake I may know by the name of my *Memorial*) that particular which I have gained: in which I need to obſerve no other method, but only to write all the notes which I take out of any one book, as of *Matthew*, *Mark*, *&c.* together, that ſo at my ſecond or third reading that particular book over, I may ſee, what the ſecond or third reading of it advantaged me more than the firſt. And theſe notes thus taken, becauſe intended as helps, to my memory, I muſt be ſure to find time within a convenient ſeaſon to review. This is a profitable courſe for me to obſerve in my ordinary meditations upon the holy Scriptures. As

As to what has been ſuggeſted by a very pious and judicious Perſon, that this uſage of reading the Holy Scriptures in the daily courſe of our Private Devotions, is not ſo ſerviceable to the furtherance, at leaſt to the raiſing Devotion, as would be a certain Methodical Scheme of ſeveral affecting Heads fitted for Meditation, of which day by day one might be taken; or where the Subject were more pious, one for two or more days, (as ſuppoſe ſometimes our Lords Suffering, ſometimes his Reſurrection, at another time his Coming to Judgment: again, other while more generally *Death, Judgment, &c.*) as I do not condemn it, (and for variety ſake, any may uſe it who pleaſe) ſo neither do I ſo generally commend it to all perſons practice, as the former. For except People have Books prepared on thoſe ſeveral Heads, ordinary perſons will find this way of Meditation ſo difficult, as they will not be able to carry on a thread of thoughts to any uſeful effect. Reading the Books

of others, they may profitably follow the track of their thoughts, but few will be able to bring their own to any affective pitch of Maturity.

But then as to Holy Scripture, we know how common (bleſſed be the providence of our good God) it is now in all mens hands, and ſo how eaſie to be had; we know alſo its fertility, how full it is, a Fountain inexhauſtible, and that we ought by all means to endeavour *the Word of God may dwell plentifully in us*, as being uſeful in all conditions, on all occaſions and ſeaſons, in ſickneſs and in health, in proſperity and adverſity; when we cannot come at Books, alone, and in company, by night on our beds, on our way by day; indeed, when and where not? So that none can ever be too perfect in it, nor reaſonably go over it (at leaſt the general uſeful part of it) too often, and ſeldom do we go over it again, without new obſervations.

Beſides, when we are once well vers'd in Scripture, we ſhall be able, if

if we see fit, to accommodate it, with excellent use, to the very purpose just now suggested. Would we meditate on our Lords passion, we can easily peruse the History of it in the several Evangelists, and the Prophet *Esay*'s little Gospel to this purpose *Chap.* LIII, the Apostles Doctrine touching the Sacrifice of the death of Christ, in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, *&c.* The like advantage we may have, would we meditate on, the Resurrection of our Lord, or even on the general Resurrection and our own, or any like subject, we know whither to turn, and where to read, what will afford most divine and incorrupt matter to our barren minds, and most excellently both imploy and conduct our thoughts. So that upon the whole, I judge it every way the best, with such variation as our Christian discretion shall direct, to stick to our first propounded Method. And thus, for the present, I dismiss the business of Reading, and Meditating on Holy Scripture, in the course of our daily Devotions.

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The next thing which my meditations are to be employed upon, is upon my particular *State* and *Ways*, which I am in some measure to take notice of, as well that I may be more circumspect in such particulars, wherein I shall find greater need of circumspection, as that I may be able to address my self to God in a way suitable to my condition. For *my condition varying, my prayers ought to vary accordingly.*

First then, as to my *Ways*, that is, Thoughts, Words, and Deeds, (for all these the Scripture comprizeth under that one term of our *Ways*,) These all know to be either good or bad. And as to both, I am to look both *backward* and *forward.*

1. I am to look *back*, and consider with my self what *new temptations* have befallen me, how far my heart hath closed with them, and been overcome by them; (1.) As to matters of *Commission*, whether of *inward sins*, such which are acted in the mind (as evil Thoughts, Desires, Resolutions or Designs) or of *outward* and bodily acting, as Words

Words and Deeds. Hath not my *diſcourſe* been Untrue, Unſavory, Haughty, Paſſionate, or the like? my *actions* Ungodly, Diſhoneſt, Uncharitable, contrary to Sobriety? And, (2.) as to *Omiſſion*; Have I left nothing undone which I was to have done, which I had reſolved to do, and had opportunity for? All this, as far as preſent convenience will admit, being duly conſidered, is ſeriouſly to be laid open before God in my following Prayers, both as to *confeſſion* thereof, and *ſupplication for pardon*, and *future grace* againſt ſuch miſcarriages.

In like manner, if in review of my late ways, I find through grace my ſoul to have been conſiderably taken up with good thoughts, deſires, or ſtudies, my diſcourſe to have brought glory to God, or edification and quickening to my ſelf or others, my actions commendable, and ſuch, which through Chriſt I hope are acceptable to God, I am to *bleſs God* for his *preventing and aſſiſting grace*, acknowledging with St. *Paul* the whole, even mine own

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labours and induſtry to have flow'd from that Fountain. *By the grace of God*, ſaith he, *I am what I am. I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which is in me.* 1 Cor. 15. 10.

2. *Forward* too I am to look (eſpecially in my *morning* meditation, and before ſuch times in which any more conſiderable work or imployment awaits me,) and conſider (1.) *what opportunities* I may have of doing *ſervice to God*, or *good to man*, (2) what *temptations* to any ſin my approaching buſineſs or company probably will bring with it: and not only in my *reſolutions* to *prepare and arm* my ſelf accordingly for the embracing, and with my utmoſt might doing my duty, and withſtanding the ſin; but alſo in my *prayers* ſuitably *implore* Divine ſtrength and aid.

Many ſuch thoughts as theſe a ſerious Chriſtian, who uſeth to imploy time to his beſt advantage, will entertain while he is putting on his clothes in the morning, or outwardly taken up in any like neceſſary acts.

acts. This as to meditation upon my ways.

Secondly, as to my present *Inward ſtate*, the *temper of my mind*: Let me examine that; whether I find any relentings or meltings of heart for thoſe *my* wandrings, which I have before viewed, any firmneſs and reſolution for the future againſt the like: Accordingly I am to apply my ſelf to God in prayer, either for the giving me a due ſenſe of, and remorſe for, and reſolution and watchfulneſs againſt my ſin, or for the heightning and ſtrengthening thoſe degrees hereof, which I already have.

Thirdly, as to my *Outward ſtate*; Let me conſider, how *God's holy providence* hath either favoured or croſſed my ordinary affairs and deſigns: for accordingly ſtill I am to addreſs my ſelf unto God in prayer, either by praiſing him for my ſucceſſes, or bewailing thoſe ſins and omiſſions which I may judge have blaſted them, or otherwiſe, as my Chriſtian diſcretion ſhall ſuggeſt.

All which heads of ſelf-examination

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tion and Meditation, if, because lying here at some distance, I cannot always readily in my memory run through without confusion or omission, it may be expedient to have them summ'd up into short questions, which I may turn to daily upon occasion, and put each to my soul to be answered unto, upon enquiry made into my own conscience.

1. *What sin committed by* { Thought? Word? Deed?

2. *What duty omitted as to* { Thought? Word? Deed?

3. *What grace or virtue acted in* { Thought? Word? Deed?

4. *How hath God dealt with me in his providences, and what in me occasioning such dealings?*

5. *What temper of mind am I now in, considering my own late carriage, and God's providences towards me?*

6. *What*

6. *What temptations to sin* } Am I this day [or night] likely to meet with.
7. *What opportunities of virtue* }

The last head upon which my meditations are to be imployed, is my *Prayers*, which I am now about to offer up unto God; in which if I use a *set form*, I am to consider where those *new particulars* of *confession, petition, or praises*, which by examination of my self and condition I have found necessary, must come in; after what sort they may be conveniently expressed, and sometimes (when my condition requires, and my time will permit me to be more large or earnest in any part of prayer) with what arguments I may strengthen my faith, and plead with God touching what I desire to speed for; or again with what circumstances of my sins, or God's mercies, I may heighten my repentance for my sins, or thankfulness for those mercies. If I *do not use my self to a set form*, then will it be necessary that I *more deliberately meditate*

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meditate what I intend to confeſs, to ask, to praiſe God for, how I ſhall ſo call upon him or conceive of him, as may ſuit with thoſe main and principal addreſſes, which I am to make to him. Whether every particular expreſſion, or the juſt words before thought, it haply matters not very much: but that ſome fit, ſignificant, proper and quickning expreſſions, for the ſeveral parts and ſubſtantials of my prayer, be prepared, it is expedient, as well for the greater readineſs of the ſoul in prayer, which when it is much to ſeek in this caſe, cannot do its duty with attention, nor without diſturbance and intermiſſion of due affection; as alſo that nothing unworthy of the nature of prayer, and the worſhip of God, may be offered up unto him. And in this point it may be ſingularly helpful to conſider, what of thoſe *expreſſions*, *promiſes*, *narratives*, *experiences*, &c. which I have at any time read in the Word of God, may be uſeful to me in thoſe my intended addreſſes to the Throne of Grace. God (as

(as already intimated) loves to hear his own language from us; and so it is, that the very *expressions of Scripture* have a *marvellous affecting power* upon the devout heart, beyond those, which seem not to have been alike sanctified by the Holy Ghosts using them. Part II. Chap. 6. Pial. 1.

CHAP. VI.

Of Prayer, and first of its substance and parts.

WHat I have *read* being thus digested by *Meditation*, and by the like meditation preparation being made for *Prayer*, That now remains as the third and most compleat act of my daily devotion: touching which, besides the precepts already given, others yet remain to be given, when the consideration of the nature of the duty hath a little made way for them.

Now *Prayer is a seeking unto God, and before him representing our Estates and Desires.* The

Part. II. Chap. 6.

The *general nature* of prayer is a betaking or *addreſſing our ſelves to God*: and therefore its firſt act is *Invocation*, or calling upon him. Now our condition, who are *duſt* and *aſhes*, and his Majeſty being conſidered, we cannot well be eſteemed to ſeek unto him without *adoration or worſhipping* of him in the beginning of theſe our addreſſes; for that in all ſeeking to Superiors, we ever begin with ſome acknowledgment of their being above us, able to help us, *&c.* upon which accounts we uſe ordinarily ſome teſtimonies of reverence towards them: But God being infinitely above us, the Self-exiſtent and Almighty Fountain of our being, and the moſt gracious Author and beſtower of all comforts, upon whom we daily live, the reverence which we bear and expreſs to him ought to be advanced to the higheſt pitch poſſible. Now *the acting and giving the greateſt reverence and honour that we can with ſoul and body*, do I call *Adoration*. I[illegible] therefore put both theſe to[illegible]

we have the first part of *Prayer*, to wit, *An invocatory adoration of God*, that is, *an humble calling upon him*, accompanied with *worshipping and adoring his infinite Majesty*. And this in the most complete prayers extant in Scripture we may observe: particularly in that for ever to be reverenced pattern, our Lord's Prayer, the first sentence contains what we speak of. (*Our Father*: this is a *calling* upon God. *Which art in Heaven*; these are words befitting one who *adores* his Majesty.) So in that prayer of *Hezekiah*, *Isaiah* xxxvii. 16. *O Lord of Hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the Cherubims; thou art God, even thou alone*, &c. How evidently doth this beginning of his prayer carry in it an *Invocation* of (or calling upon) God, accompanied with the *acknowledgment* and *adoration* of his Deity?

The first part of prayer we gathered out of those words (expressing its general nature) it is a *seeking unto God*. The second we may gather out of them, which follow, *it is*

Part II. Chap. 6.

is a repreſenting our ſtate before him. Our *eſtates* naturally are *ſinful* and *miſerable*. So far forth as we retain any thing of our old nature, ſo far are ſin and miſery inſeparable adjuncts or attendants unto us. The repreſenting therefore our eſtates before God is the *confeſſing our ſins*, and *laying open our grievances and wants* before him. A ſecond part of prayer then is *Confeſſion*.

That which all *ſinners* ſhould deſire is *pardon*: that which all *miſerable* perſons do naturally deſire is *help*. The repreſenting then our deſires before God is the *begging mercy and grace to help in time of need*; that is,

1. Pardon of ſin.
2. Deliverance from our miſery:
   Internal, by the ſanctification of our hearts, and growth in grace.
   External, by meet ſupplies of our outward wants.

A third act of prayer therefore is, *Petition* or *asking*.

Some-

Somewhat more yet is considerable in *our states* here below, which though naturally miserable, as aforesaid, yet are by the manifold grace of God made in several respects *more comfortable by reason* of variety of *blessings*. Now he that receives a *benefit* ought to have at the least a will and desire of *thankfulness*. He therefore who duly represents his state and desires unto God, lays open also before him those several mercies which at his hands he receives, humbly blessing and praising him the Author of them. The last part of prayer then is *Thanksgiving*.

Now because all these may be done either for our selves or others, therefore is prayer double, or of two sorts.

That which merely respects our selves.

That which we offer up for others, called *Intercession*.

From all this it is evident; that *the first thing, which he, who would learn to pray, must take care of, is that he throughly know himself*, that is,

Part II. Chap. 6.

is, (1) Be acquainted with his own ſtate, with his ſins, his miſeries and wants, inward and outward; otherwiſe he can never duly repreſent them unto God. (2) That he well know his own deſires and reſolutions, leſt he play the hypocrite with God, *asking* what he *deſireth not*, or *vowing* what he *intends not*. Theſe are the ſubſtantials of Prayer.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the right manner of Prayer. First, of its inward manner. Some considerations to quicken to sincerity and heartiness in Prayer. What graces are to be exercised in each part of Prayer.

THE manner of the performing every duty is much looked upon by God. Now prayer being such an immediate act of worship, and it being most just, reasonable and necessary, that we should worship God with the whole man, that is, both with soul and body; in the *manner of prayer* there can be only considerable, its Inward and Outward part.

The *inward* manner of prayer is unquestionably most respected by God: for that according hereunto is the prayer, and the man, sincere or

Part II. Chap. 7.

or otherwiſe. And the Conſideration hereof ſhould incite us chiefly to care herein. I may pray in as good and as many words, in as devout poſtures, and, in a word, after as pious a ſort, as to what there is outward in prayer, as ever man did, and yet be hypocritical in my prayers. But it is impoſſible, that I ſhould pray with my *Soul and all that is within me*, and not be cordial, honeſt and ſincere in thoſe prayers which I ſo make: And therefore as God doth, ſo, I ſay, every Chriſtian ought to look chiefly to the inward diſpoſition of his ſoul in his *Devotions*.

We may note further for our quickening herein, that God not only *requireth* the heart in prayer, but *hath accepted* and often *doth accept* the inward breathings of it, and anſwer them as fully, as if all other circumſtances belonging to the outward manner of prayer had been obſerved. As in the caſe of *Hannah*; who in that ſo ſucceſsful and effectual prayer of hers *ſpake in her heart only*.

1 Sam. 1. 13.

Now

Now prayer is then right as to its *inward manner*, when there is an hearty *exercise of Christian graces* and *affections suitable* to the substance of the prayer, which we offer up to God, (that is to say, to go through the parts of prayer.) *I adore and call upon God as I ought*, when in my calling upon him, I really *believe* that he is, and that he is such that he hath revealed himself to be, and as I now express or conceive him, and therefore *with reverence humbly submit* my self before his Majesty. It is a piece of holy skill worthy taking notice of, which is observable in the prayers of holy men in Scripture, That they usually so frame their invocations (or callings upon God) as may suit with their main business at the Throne of grace, and strengthen their faith for those particular mercies which they ask. Thus in that forenamed prayer of *Hezekias*'s against the *Assyrian* Armies. *O Lord of Hosts*, (for he prayed against a mighty host, and for deliverance from it.) *God of Israel* (he therefore so calls God; to put

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put him in mind of his covenant with *Israel*, that he might ſtretch forth his hands for the deliverance of his own people) *who dwelleſt between the Cherubims* (that is, who haſt here recorded thy name, and promiſed to meet and bleſs, *and from thy Mercy-Seat* to anſwer, thy people. He therefore makes mention of God's promiſed preſence, or *dwelling* between the Cherubims, partly becauſe he was then in the Temple, and ſo worſhipping God in a manner before his mercy-ſeat, that is before the Cherubims, but more eſpecially (as we may conceive) That he might prevail with God to ſave that City, where his Temple and this his Mercy-Seat was placed.) Every expreſſion in this his invocation hath ſomewhat in it proper to his prayer and ſuit, and ſo of force to ſtrengthen his faith and dependance upon God, that he might the more ſurely prevail. In ſhort then, the graces to be exerciſed *in adoration* or *calling upon God*, chiefly are, *Faith*, *Fear*, or *Reverence* of God, and *Humility*.

I then *confeſs* my ſelf to God as I ought, when with *hearty ſorrow* and *repentance* (which, if earneſt, will be accompanied with a kind of *indignation* againſt my ſelf) I lay open impartially my ſins before him, not ſparing the ſweeteſt or cloſeſt: and with an *humble ſenſe* of my own vileneſs, impotency, and emptineſs, acknowledge my wants, or his juſt judgments upon me for any of my ſins. So that the chief grace to be exerciſed peculiarly in confeſſion is *repentance and godly ſorrow*, an humble and tender ſenſe of what we confeſs, accompanied with *ſhame* of our ſelves, and *abhorrency of our ſins*, and, if occaſion require, *juſtifying God*. Part. II. Chap. 7. Pſal. 51. 4.

Further then, I *aſk* as I ought, when, *as* ſenſible of mine own unworthineſs, out of an *humble truſt* in God through the merits of his Son (which truſt his gracious promiſes and declarations of good will through him, by me ever had reſpect to, do encourage me to take up) I *heartily* and with *pure intention deſire* what I ask at his hands: or at leaſt am heartily ſor-

ry

Part II. Chap. 7.

ry, if I cannot ſay I heartily deſire all I ask. Now becauſe, while I am asking, it ſo cometh to paſs, that I often intermix ſomewhat of *vow*, as in asking the pardon of ſome paſt ſins, many times I engage to diligent and watchful oppoſition for the future againſt them; therefore it is neceſſary, that if I would ask aright, I ask with *reſolution and purpoſe of endeavouring a new life*. And further, for that I cannot expect forgiveneſs from God, except I forgive from my heart my brethren, therefore I muſt ask in *charity*. So then the graces chiefly to be exerciſed in Petition are, Firſt, *Faith* or an humble truſt and hope in God through *Jeſus Chriſt* that I ſhall ſpeed (which is moſt truly *Praying in his name.*) Secondly, *Sincerity*, and real *Love* towards God and holineſs. Thirdly, A ſtedfaſt *purpoſe of obedience*, which is the moſt conſiderable part of repentance. Fourthly, *Charity* towards my Brethren.

Laſtly, I then *praiſe* or give God thanks for his mercies as I ought, when I have an *inward acknowledgment*

ment and *ſenſe* that it is from him alone, and through his mere favour, that I enjoy theſe mercies: and when, not only I my ſelf do *admire*, but deſire that heaven and earth may admire him for his goodneſs: when alſo I do all this with a *reſolution of improving* the mercy given, that is, of walking as it becometh one, who hath been vouchſafed ſuch a bleſſing, and *devoting* or giving my ſelf wholly up to him, to pleaſe and ſerve him in all things. So that the graces to be exerciſed in thankſgiving chiefly are, 1. *Humility*, and a *ſingle eye* at the grace of God; or a ſenſe of our own unworthineſs, and of God's free mercy and grace, the only fountain of all received or hoped for benefits. 2. *Love*, or an admiration of his goodneſs, accompanied with a deſire that he may receive from us and the whole Creation all poſſible glory for it. 3. *Reſolution*, and *ſtudy* of greater and more ſuitable *obedience* and duty to him. And to this purpoſe (4.) A more zealous and paſſionate, but hearty *Devoting* our

Part. II. Chap. 7.

ſelves to him, which is our trueſt *gratitude*.

Of expreſſing our gratitude to God, for mercies received, by *liberality* or *charity* to thoſe who want ſuch mercies, ſomewhat will anon be ſaid, in a proper place and more diſtinctly.

In the mean while, theſe we may conclude the chief of thoſe graces, in the exerciſe of which the due inward manner of *prayer*, or a *praying temper* conſiſts: a compoſition ſo amiable, as that it will ever, where it is, ſend up an odour of a ſweet ſavour unto Heaven, and delight, ſhall I ſay, or overcome, the Almighty Majeſty.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the beſt outward manner of Prayer, in fit poſtures and fit words. Of praying by gift, *and the inconveniences alledgable againſt it. Of praying by a* form, *and the incoveniences alledgable againſt it. An* accommodation *and reconcilement of both.*

IN the *outward manner* of Prayer the chief points conſiderable are, the uſe of fit *poſtures* and meet *words*.

Now, though the *poſture of the body* ſeem to be a ſmall matter, yet methinks my Prayers want their due ſolemnity, if not performed in a poſture of worſhip. True it is, many a devout prayer a man may make riding upon his horſeback, walking in the fields, and the like: and right Chriſtian is it, thus to ſanctifie our neceſſary journeys, or the time which otherwiſe would be

Part II. Chap. 8.

wholly loſt in travel, or ſtoln away by ſuch recreatory obambulation: But theſe are occaſional, and not ſet and ſolemn devotions. Here the body being otherwiſe neceſſarily imployed, the moſt which we can give to God is the ſoul: or if to thoughts, words be added, it is as much as well can be. But in our fixt courſe of devotion, it is not to be ſuppoſed that we worſhip God (*aliud agentes*) imployed with any thing but his worſhip: And therefore herein let the body, as well as the ſoul, be taken up in meet acts of worſhip. Now that I account to be the beſt poſture of worſhip, which beſt expreſſeth an inward reverence of that Majeſty, to whom we addreſs our ſelves; who having *fearfully made* the body, and to this day *wonderfully* upheld and *preſerved* it, and (which is infinitely more) *redeemed* even the very body to immortality by the body and blood of his Son, hath obliged it, as well as the ſoul, to all poſſible homage. And it is to be obſerved, that St. *Paul* ſeems to ſpeak (chiefly, if not only) of private

vate and his daily devotion, when he ſaith, *I bow my knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* What was his therefore, let it be our practice, as often as we thus pray, to bow our knees: and (if to no other end, but that we may be ſure to mind that they be holy and *without wrath*) let us add the *lifting up of hands.* Other poſtures may be ſometimes neceſſary in our ſolemn humiliations, or more earneſt deprecations of any imminent evil; ſuch as is *Proſtration*, or caſting our ſelves on the earth before God: to which, pious diſcretion will eaſily in their ſeaſon direct.

As to matter of *words*, or the forms of prayer, this age hath ſeen more controverſie, and that in *England* alone, than all ages from the beginning of the world have known all the world over. Touching which matter I ſay only, That the nature of prayer being, as before ſaid, a *ſeeking unto God by way of adoration, confeſſion, petition, and praiſe*, if we do this with honeſt hearts, and ſuitable affections, whether the words

Part II. Chap 8.

in which we utter our ſelves, be our own or another's; whether they be forethought or ſudden, (provided they fitly and reverently expreſs the inward ſenſe of our hearts) it mattereth not, nor is it at all eſſential unto *Prayer*. For the full Eſſence of Prayer is complete, ſuch an addreſs being made inwardly by the ſoul, and outwardly thus expreſſed by the tongue and body: and be the words whoſe they will, my praying them (that is, offering them up to God) with an heart ſuitable to them, hath made them as much mine, as if I had invented, contrived, dictated, or pen'd them at the firſt. I think therefore, if men would be ſober and peaceably minded, this need not make either a ſtir in the World, or move any ſcruple to a Chriſtian's Conſcience.

I profeſs my ſelf no whit guilty of undervaluing the free effuſions of the ſoul before God (in private eſpecially) in ſuch expreſſions as the affected and moved mind ſuggeſts, or as the ſpirit gives utterance. But in

in my daily private devotions, to uſe perpetually ſuch a looſe and arbitrary way, I think hath theſe inconveniences. *Firſt*, that (by reaſon ſometimes of the coldneſs, dulneſs, and heedleſneſs of my heart; other times by reaſon of diſtractions, incumbrances, and the like almoſt unavoidable miſchiefs) my devotions will be too often ſlightly ſlubbered over, perfunctorily and diſorderly performed: Whereas had I a mature and well compoſed prayer before me, which I uſe wholly to offer up to God, all would be much more ſubſtantial: And though haply my heart may have been, in theſe my prayers too too dead (as it was likely perhaps to have been, had I prayed otherwiſe, for ſuch or ſuch a ſeaſon) yet ſhall I not prove guilty of ſuch idleneſs, negligence, and ſlightineſs, as otherwiſe I ſhould have been guilty of. And ſuch infirmities, which are incident to us by reaſon of our preſent frailty and ſtate, God is likely the more eaſily to pity and paſs by, when he ſees that, though we are more indiſpoſed than

Part II. Chap 8.

ordinary, yet are we no whit leſs diligent. Secondly, another inconvenience thereby may oftentimes be the ommiſſion of many things neceſſary to be confeſſed, asked, or returned thanks for; not ſo much through negligence, dulneſs, &c. (as before) as incogitancy and unavoidable forgetfulneſs. Our ordinary wants and ſpiritual concerns we may come not to mind, either at all, or as we ought, through being much intent on ſome other preſſing (outward) evils. Common experience will eaſily ſatisfie a Chriſtian herein, who is but vers'd in the practice of what we ſpeak of. Have I not many times kneeled down before God with an intention to ask ſuch things, which, by reaſon of my earneſt asking ſomewhat elſe, I have forgotten to ask before I aroſe? and hath not the reaſon been the mere following extemporary ſuggeſtion? Let it be conſidered.

Again, on the other ſide, to uſe always a certain and conſtant form of words, ſeems to have theſe inconveniences.

veniences. *First*, That we having almoſt daily new ſins to confeſs, new wants to beg a ſupply of; theſe by ſuch courſe ſhall be omitted, or only lightly and generally toucht, at leaſt not ſo particularly and affectionately preſſed and inſiſted upon as they ought. 2. Beſides, ſometimes haply I would ſpend more time in prayer than at another time. Now if my prayers be always the ſame, I cannot, *except* (as Papiſts are reported to do their *Credo*'s and *Ave Maries*) I ſhould run over and over the ſame again. 3. Further, frequent uſe may breed dulneſs, as ſome may think, and ſay they find.

Theſe being the inconveniences of both caſes, and each caſe beſides having advocates (or perſons that love and plead for them) even amongſt the common people, it will be beſt to move for an *Accommodation*: And that may be on this wiſe.

The inconveniences of the former caſe may be avoided, by the having a certain good, plain, and full form of prayer, which we well underſtand,

Part. II. Chap. 8.

derſtand, and by uſually tying our ſelves hereto: not ſo as, 1. to think our work is done by the prayer being ſaid; for that were to neglect the moſt neceſſary part in the manner of prayer, to wit, the inward addreſs and application of the heart to God, contrary to former rule: nor ſo, 2. as not to alter for this or that time any expreſſion as God may move our hearts in prayer, or inſert any new thing as we have need: but only ſo, 1. as to enſure our ſelves that our devotions and prayers be ſound and complete, that we offer not to God the *halt and the lame*: and ſo, 2. as to keep the mind fixt and conſtant to its buſineſs, intent upon all its ſpiritual concerns.

And again, the inconveniences of the latter caſe will be avoided hereby, that we have not ſuppoſed the form upon occaſion altogether unalterable, as above ſaid, but rather to have its fit and proper places, wherein we may inſert or put in the *confeſſion* of new ſins, with their proper aggravations, as alſo fit places for the adding of any new matter

matter of *Petition* or *Thanksgiving*, as there ſhall be occaſion. And to the laſt inconvenience of this ſecond caſe, it may be ſaid, that *Uſe* cannot beget *dulneſs*, if the prayer, thus ſuppoſed to be framed, be uſed according to former precepts, with *Reading* and *Meditation* before it, which exerciſes will have in a good meaſure quickned the heart for prayer. And, as for ſuch more *ſolemn ſeaſons*, when we would ſpend more time with God in prayer, we need not ſo to *tie* our ſelves to theſe our *ordinary devotions*, thoſe which at ſuch ſeaſons we intend, being already ſuppoſed more than ordinary. We may be larger in the confeſſion of ſin, more particular in its aggravation, more earneſt for ſuch and ſuch mercies as we want, *&c.* according as we ſhall ſee occaſion: and either uſe the groundwork and ſubſtance of thoſe our uſual prayers with ſuch amplifications as we ſhall judge meeteſt, or for that time, inſtead of them, uſe ſuch other prayers as we ſhall find beſt to ſuit with our temper and occaſions;

Part II. Chap. 9.

occaſions; for the preparation of which prayers, directions will hereafter be given.

In the mean time for better underſtanding and comprehending the *precepts* given, as alſo for the ſupply of ſuch who may haply be ſcarce able to frame to themſelves ſuch a form, it may not be amiſs to ſubjoyn one for morning, and another for evening, framed according to the former rules.

CHAP. IX.

A Form of Prayer made according to the former accommodation, which may be uſed in our morning Privacy.

THE Chriſtian then having read and meditated, as before directed, let him reverently kneel down, lifting up his hands and eyes, but *moſt ſurely his heart*, to Heaven, and ſay,

O

O Almighty and moſt bleſſed God, Lord of heaven and earth, who makeſt the out goings both of morning and evening, and by whoſe good hand upon me thy creature I am awaked out of my laſt nights ſleep, and being riſen, here preſent my ſelf before thee: I humbly bow to thee my knees, and therewith my heart and ſoul, and deſire with all that is within me to adore thy bleſſed Majeſty. *Invocation and Adoration.*

But moſt unworthy, and of my ſelf moſt inſufficient, am I to perform unto thee any worſhip or ſervice. What is duſt and aſhes, (and ſuch am I, if I were innocent) to take upon it to ſpeak unto thee, O Lord? But I, O God, am a guilty wretch, one whom it becometh *Confeſſion, 1. of Habitual ſin.*

Part II. Chap. 9.

becometh to ſtand afar off, and ſhame covering my face, to cry *Unclean, Unclean.* My ſoul is naturally over-run with luſts, as with an univerſal Leproſie: there is no free part of me. My life is as univerſally corrupt as mine heart: My child-hood and youth have not only been vanity, but ſin: I have done nothing elſe therein, but fulfilled the deſires of my fleſh and mind. My corruptions have only grown with me: and my ſins ſince become ſo much the more ſinful, by how much the more knowledge I have had of thy will, and ſtrength and engagements to have performed it.

2 *Of actual ſins.*

To this very day, as indeed I ever have done, I daily break thy holy Laws in thought, word, and actions, by chooſing what thou haſt forbidden, and neg-

neglecting what thou haſt commanded. ***. In all my ways I moſt miſerably tranſgreſs. My very † ſleep it ſelf, O Lord, is not innocent. Nor is it thus only in the common and more ordinary actions of my life. Thoſe few good deeds which I do, have many, not only † infirmities, but ſins in them: and I have need to repent of my very righteouſneſs [of my † ***] I therefore ſo deſire to do, and am here come before thee, as thou haſt commanded me, to confeſs my ſin unto thee, with hopes, according to thy promiſe, that I ſhall find mercy, I have, O God, confeſſed to thee, as I am able. Now

* *Here confeſs any particular or freſh ſin committed, or duty neglected, which in thy examination of thy ſelf thou haſt found.*

† *Remember in the uſe of theſe or any ſuch words, to reflect in thy thoughts upon any particulars, which thy conſcience tells thee, they may fitly repreſent to God touching thee.*

Part II. Chap. 9.

Now Mercy, Mercy, let me find with thee through Christ Jesus my Saviour. Remember that atonement, which he made by the Blood of his Cross: In those Streams throughly wash away my filth: By those Wounds let me be healed; and by his Death let me attain a blessed immortality; (**) And send down thine holy Spirit abundantly into mine heart, which may renew me throughout according to thine Image, healing all the naughty inclinations of my soul, and begetting in me an hearty love unto holiness, and a constant fear of thee my God, that I may have respect unto all thy Commandments, and walk before thee all my days with a perfect heart. Quicken me also by the same thy

Petition. 1 *For our selves.*

* *Particularly let me obtain the pardon of* *

thy good Spirit to give all diligence in every duty (*and especially in* **) that I may grow in grace, and in thy favour, and daily come nearer unto ſalvation and thee. And foraſmuch as I my ſelf am unſtable as water, preſerve me by thy power through Faith, that I fall not from my integrity, nor depart wickedly from thee my God. Eſpecially keep thy ſervant from his iniquity, (*or his iniquities of* ***) and make me moſt watchful againſt all thoſe * occaſions and wiles of ſin, by which I have been formerly inſnared. My outward condition, during all the days of my pilgrimage here on earth, do thou order to thy glory and my own good: and, if it may be thy

* *Here thou mayſt have many private and proper reflections: and ſo generally wherefoever the ſame mark is ſet.*

Part II. Chap. 9.

thy holy Will, grant, that it may be ſo far quiet and proſperous, as that I may ſerve thee chearfully and without diſtraction.

2. For others.

Be gracious alſo, O Lord, unto thine holy Church, and to this Church, eſpecially. Watch over us daily for good: And be pleaſed to bleſs and preſerve the King's Majeſty, his Queen, and all the Royal Family. Grant that all Magiſtrates may be faithful both to thee and to their Prince and Country in their truſt: and that all Miniſters, of what degree ſoever, may be ſober, watchful, fervent and ſucceſsful in thy work. Let the whole Nation, and eſpecially this neighbourhood, grow in the true knowledge and fear of thee. Viſit with thy grace † and bleſſing all my † Relations,

Remember particular reflections and, if need, mentions.

ons, my † Friends and † Benefactors. Forgive and reconcile both to thy ſelf and me all mine † enemies. Comfort, relieve, and in thine own good time deliver all thy ſervants † who are in any diſtreſs inward or outward, and ſanctifie both to them and me all thy dealings, cauſing all things in the end to work together to us all for good, according to thy infinite Power and Wiſdome, whereby thou over-ruleſt all events. Part II. Chap. 9.

Thanksgiving. For which thy gracious adminiſtration of the whole courſe of Nature, and the multitude of bleſſings appertaining both to this life and that which is to come, which thy providence inceſſantly heaps upon all mankind, and particularly upon me thy moſt undeſerving ſervant, for ever bleſſed

Part II. Chap. 9.

bleſſed be thy holy Name. Eſpecially may Heaven and Earth ever Praiſe thee, for the redemption of the world by thy Son; and the knowledge of thee through him revealed in thy Word; and the mighty workings of thy Spirit thereby. And be thou pleaſed to accept of that praiſe which thy ſervant hereby returns thee (as great as he can) for them all, and particularly, for this laſt nights refreſhings, together with the comfortable reſtoring him to the enjoyment of day. Grant me thy ſpecial Grace, that I may ſpend my time to thy Glory, and may be all the day long in thy fear. Keep me that I fall into no ſin, nor run into any danger. And accept thou this my morning ſervice, and together me, who here devote my

ſel

ſelf to thee, through my Saviour Chriſt Jeſus, in whoſe Name I further pray, as by him taught, when I pray, to ſay, Part II. Chap. 9.

Our Father, &c.

CHAP.

Part II. Chap. 10.

CHAP. X.

A form of Prayer, made as the other, which may be uſed in our evening Privacy.

IN like manner the Chriſtian having entred his *Cloſet* with ſome ſuch ejaculatory or ſhort prayer, as before directed to, and having *read* and *meditated* as in the morning, may, I preſume, very profitably uſe, with ſuch alteration as his condition ſhall require, and his diſcretion direct, the enſuing Prayer.

Invocation and Adoration.

O Moſt Holy and Gracious Father, the ſearcher of all hearts; who ſeeſt my down-lying as well as up-riſing, darkneſs and light being both alike to thee; who art near unto all my ways, and eſpieſt my thoughts, while they are yet afar off. I have here

here set my self before thee to pay my evening homage, and desire to present both my soul and body (as is most due) a living Sacrifice to thee my God, who hast made and redeemed both. Part. II. Chap. 10.

But most unfit, O Lord, are they to be to thee presented, every part of both being naturally corrupt and abominable, and nothing in me free from the loathsom defilement of sin. My soul by nature but much more by customary sin, is desperately wicked, and all its powers perverse and bent upon evil. My mind alienated from thee through the ignorance that is within me: My affections unruly and masterless: My will full of enmity to thy Law, and enslaved to the service of divers lusts and pleasures. And as to my Body, in iniquity, O Lord, was I shapen, and in sin

Confession 1. Of habitual corruption.

Part. II. Chap. 10. 2. *Of actual sin.*

did my Mother conceive me: And ever since, have all my members been, as capable, very much servants unto iniquity and instruments of wickedness. With my whole man have I long obeyed the Law of sin, and fulfilled the desires of my flesh and corrupt mind. I scarce can think of that sin, in which I have not had my hands one part of my time or other. In sin, O God, have I spent not only my vainer age, and the days of my ignorance, but my ripest years, and those of fullest discretion, which I have yet attain'd to. Since the light of the Gospel hath shone into my opened eyes, since thou hast touched my heart with a sense of that evil, which there is in sin, so wicked and perverse a servant have I been, that knowing my Lord's will I have both neglected

neglected to do accordingly, and presumptuously done contrary unto it. To the very present time, O Lord, how † frequently, and how † sadly do I backslide? What † liberty do I allow my self? How † heedless do I converse? I walk at a mere peradventure with thee my God. Notwithstanding all my vows and promises of watchfulness unto obedience, this very day how little hath thy fear been in my heart? and from hence comes it to pass, that I have so miserably departed from thee (by ***.) With what stripes therefore do I deserve to be beaten? And, how righteous a quarrel against me hath not only thy Justice, but thy very Grace and Mercy.

* *Here confess any of the miscarriages of the day, which thou hast been supposed to have taken notice of in thy meditation.*

Part. II. Chap. 10.

Petition. 1. For our ſelves.

Notwithſtanding, O Bleſſed Father, give thy poor creature leave to beſeech, and let me prevail with thee not to take that advantage againſt me, which juſtly thou maiſt: Rather, now thou haſt born ſo long, break my heart by this thy goodneſs, and make thy forbearance and long ſuffering to lead me to repentance. Vouchſafe unto me thy ſanctifying ſpirit: Let it fill me with an holy ſhame of my former ways: And let the ſenſe of my own unworthineſs towards thee beget in me an holy indignation againſt my ſelf, a paſſionate and conſtant zeal by future diligence, as far as is poſſible to redeem and repair ſome of my loſt and moſt ſadly miſ-ſpent time. Let my heart be never void of a ſtedfaſt purpoſe of ſerving thee in the

the impartial performance of every known duty, (especially of ***) and careful avoidance of every sin. (*) And having thus given to will, do thou of the same thy good pleasure give also to do, following the preventions of thy Grace by the continual assistances thereof, so that I may proceed from one vertue unto another, perfecting holiness in thy fear, and keeping a Conscience void of offence towards thee and all men.

* *Here put in any thing for which thou findest occasion.*

And this my cordial purpose, and perseverance in endeavours of pleasing thee, do thou through the blood of my Saviour graciously accept, laying not to my charge any of my former sins, nor visiting upon me, either the neglects,

Part II. Chap. 10.

or tranſgreſſions of my duty. At leaſt, however thou ſhalt here deal with thy ſervant, in the laſt day acquit me of all guilt, and through the merits of thy Son let me obtain remiſſion of all ſin, and an inheritance in thine everlaſting Kingdom. In the mean while, as to the neceſſaries of this preſent life, give thy ſervant what thou pleaſeſt, and what thou ſeeſt beſt for me, even food convenient. Thou needeſt not, O God, my ſervice; but accept my ambition of being ſerviceable unto thee, and bleſs me both with ſtrength and opportunities for it, and, if it may be thy holy will, with ſucceſs therein.

2. *For others.* Father, I pray unto thee alſo for all men (foraſmuch as thou art a God, who would'ſt have all to be ſaved, and to come

come unto the knowledge of thy truth) especially for all and every member and members of thy Universal Church, and for the particular Church of this the Land of my nativity: For the Kings Majesty, the Queen, and the whole Royal Family, for all that are in authority, for the several Stewards of thy Mysteries, the Ministers of thy Gospel (for him in particular to whose oversight thou hast committed me): that thou wilt give unto them all, according to thy most gracious pleasure, the blessings both of this Life and that which which is to come, especially such measures of thy Spirit, that every shoulder may be fitted for its burthen, and all amongst us may faithfully serve thee, according to their several degrees; so that this whole

Part II. Chap 10.

Land may be bleſſed with abundance of proſperity and peace, ſo long as the Sun and Moon endureth. Forget not peculiarly to ſhew mercy unto the † relations, † friends, † helpers, † and well-wiſhers of thy ſervant: Reward, I beſeech thee, all their love; and † forgive, good Lord, divert, and put an end unto all others malice or enmity. Let thine eyes be ever open upon, and the bowels of thy compaſſion be moved towards all thy wanting and ſuffering ſervants: Support them under, and graciouſly deliver them out of all their diſtreſſes, and let the end be peace, and righteouſneſs, and bleſſedneſs for ever.

Thanksgiving.

Thy ſervant will ſpeak yet once more, and praiſe thee for thine infinite love and compaſſion to that miſerable nature, of

of which he (*or ſhe*) is a partaker, in revealing to us, when we had all loſt or corrupted it, the knowledge of thy ſelf, both by the light of Nature, and moſt clearly by thy holy Word; in ſending thy Son for our redemption, in appointing the Miniſtry and Ordinances of thy Goſpel, and pouring out thy holy Spirit to turn us from darkneſs unto light, and from the power of Satan unto the kingdom of thy Son. O God, I particularly bleſs thee, for the knowledge which I have of thee in my Saviour Chriſt Jeſus; for my ſhare in him; for any meaſure of thy Grace on me vouchſafed; for the comfortable hope which through thy Son's blood I have of pardon and eternal life; for this days life and protection, for † the with-holding (or re-

Part II. Chap. 10.

moving those several judgments which my sins deserve, (***) for the loading me with a multitude of most undeserved blessings (especially for **) Encrease upon me thy Grace evermore; and make me thankful by proving a faithful Steward of all thy mercies. Let that Eye of thine, which never slumbreth nor sleepeth, which hath been open upon me this day, watch over me this night: Let nothing disturb or make me afraid. Let none of the sins of the day lye down with me, nor ever appear against me. Vouchsafe my body due refreshment, and let my soul have her songs in the night. Keep both from all works of darkness; and let me be ever with thee, O Father, both here

*** *Here praise God for any particular deliverance, saying, (especially for **)*

Petitionary conclusion.

here and hereafter, through thy Son my Saviour Christ Jesus, in whose name and words, I further pray.

Our Father, &c.

CHAP. XI.

Some further Directions touching the use of these Prayers. Objections of want of time, of want of privacy, considered; and Provision made in such cases.

IN these or the like words may a devout Christian, I presume, not unfitly pour out his heart before God, morning and evening. But it is to be remembred to what end these forms were prepared, and the use of them directed to, to wit, to be a provision against raw, heedless, imperfect, broken, confused, and disorderly Prayers: of which, dulness, distemper, or distraction, may make even

Part. II. Chap. II.

even the devouteſt Chriſtian to be guilty, if he always truſt to his extemporary faculty and readineſs.

Wherefore it is not the intention of the preſent direction, to tye even every one that ſhall uſe theſe or the like forms ever to them, but only commonly, or as his Chriſtian prudence and ſobriety ſhall judge it beſt ſuiting with his devotion and preſent temper: So then, if at any time a Chriſtian ſhall find his mind more ready and preſent than ordinary, ſo that he can ſay in Holy *David's* words, *My heart is fixed* (or, prepared) *O Lord my heart is fixed*, and he feel a certain overflowing of affection ready to come over his ſoul, he is to eſteem this a time, when God doth as it were beſpeak ſomewhat more than ordinary, to that purpoſe offering, and giving him to feel already, more than ordinary aſſiſtance; and by ſuch ſpecial moving of the waters ſecretly ſignifie, that he hath ſome healing benefit or refreſhment then to communicate unto the ſoul. Wherefore let him yield himſelf to the

Pſalm. 108.

the leading of the Spirit, and by no means let slip that holy season of a more free and large effusion or pouring out his soul before God: Always in the mean while remembring that he duly prepare himself, by some fore-going meditation, according to what hath been already in part spoken, and will hereafter be more fully considered.

And this practice, I presume, as it so far binds a man up, that his devotion should not be loose and slighty, so it allows him (1.) such liberty, as may duly exercise and improve any spiritual gifts which he conceives himself to have, and (2.) such variety, as that there is no fear, that custome or treading always the same track (I mean repeating the same words) should make him guilty of formality and deadness.

If there be any Objection now lying against this proposed course in our devotion, it is, as far as I can see, one of these two; either (1.) that it will take up too much time; or (2.) That those who for the general can use it, yet at all times cannot find

Part. II. Chap. II.

find opportunity for it, as of privacy when abroad, *&c.*

But as to the first case objected, we have already supposed our practist to be such, who lives somewhat above a servile life; and therefore may spare some part of his time, which surely he cannot spend to a better purpose, or upon more beneficial employment. And it will undoubtedly be found true by him, who shall set himself upon this practice, or put his devotions into this mold, that when he is once but got into the way, and setled in it, the performance of all will cost him less time by much in a day, than hath the reading of these directions. An hour in a day (or very little more) being divided into equal parts, and *half* taken in the morning, *half* at night, may, after somemoderate practice in this way, very well suffice: and they are either very full of imployment, or exceeding bad husbands of their time, who being at their own command cannot afford so much time for so necessary a work. (Not to speak that some

part:

part of this work may be reckoned a kind of ſtudying, and that as becoming, as uſeful to all ſuch as we ſpeak to. Conſider, man, which is of greater concernment, thy ſoul's, or thy bodie's welfare? Which is longer, *threeſcore years and ten*, or *Eternity*? Canſt thou therefore only find time to provide for the more unworthy?

The latter oppoſition of want of privacy, when abroad, is more or leſs conſiderable according to the accommodation and entertainment we meet with abroad, which ſometimes is ſuch that it gives us no leſs opportunities of privacy than we have at home. Then, as to the utenſils of our devotion, A Bible is eaſily got in the houſe; a Note-book in my pocket (out of which when I come home I may tranſcribe into my *Memorial* or *Accompt* any thing which I judge fit) is no great burden: no more is my prayer-book, if occaſion be. So that in this caſe my devotions may be complete. But ſuppoſe I be caſt into a chamber amongſt company, and thoſe ſuch.

Part II. Chap. 11.

ſuch whom I like not much for overlookers of my devotion. In this caſe, ſuppoſing my company to be perſons who will either ſcorn me and my religion, or diſturb me, it is better my devotions be leſs compleat, and private, than more full and open. Now totally hindred of privacy I cannot be. I can make or pretend (and that without a lye) litle common neceſſary buſineſs or occaſions, which may call me out, while I can enquire into my ſelf, and power out a ſhort prayer to God, walking or otherwiſe. And God, no doubt, will accept my devotions, when as perfect as I can, although not ſo large or complete as I would.

Now for better Proviſion againſt ſuch *ſtraits* of *place* and *time* as theſe ſuppoſed, or other like which may occurr, the two following forms may not be unſerviceable.

A Form of *a Short and Haſty* Morning Prayer.

O God, my Health, my Life, my Happineſs and Portion for ever. I moſt humbly adore and worſhip thine unſeen, but all-ſeeing Majeſty, bleſſing thee that thy good hand has raiſed me, again to caſt [*or, as occaſion ſuffers*, to bow] my ſelf at thy footſtool.

Thou, O Lord, art Gracious, and Holy, and Bleſſed: but I am vile and abominable, and deſerve to be moſt miſerable: as having a very corrupt Nature, and an Heart further depraved by a Multitude of ſins, moſt truly mine own, more in number than I can recount, and of more grievous guilt than I am able to ſet forth; yet, what is my only ſupport, not exceeding

Part II. Chap. 11.

ing thy Mercy in Christ Jesus my Saviour.

In his Name I come unto thee; and for as much as I desire to turn from all my sins, both at present and for the future, and to go mourning all my daies for what I cannot now prevent or recall; I most earnestly beseech thy pardon through my Saviours Blood, and thy Spirit, both to purge out of my heart all the old leaven of naughtiness, and repleniſh it with the Belief, Love, and Fear of thee my God; that I may daily grow in Grace, and be fruitful in all good works, glorifying thee my Heavenly Father. Grant, O Lord, I may ever cleave unto thee, and follow hard after thee, and in the end be ever with thee. Keep me this day watchful against mine iniquities,

ties, the ſins which eaſily beſet me. Lead me in the way that is good: Defend me from all Evil, and ſupply all my wants, as thou ſeeſt beſt for me.

Hear me alſo for thy Holy Church Univerſal; for ours in particular; for our KING and all Governours under him, as well Sacred as Civil; for the whole Body of the People; for all my Friends and Benefactors, for my Relations and Kindred, [eſpecially for &c.] for all who are diſtreſſed. O thou All-ſufficient God, be thou a ſhield and ſuccour unto them all: And in the unity of thy Church, guide me and all thine by thy Counſel, until thou bring us to thy Glory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

Our Father, &c.

Another

Part II. Chap. 11.

Another like Form in such cases, for Evening.

O Father of Lights, with whom is no darkneſs, who never ſlumbereſt nor ſleepeſt; I frail Creature, to whoſe ſupport thou haſt made ſleep neceſſary, being now about to go to my reſt, humbly fall [*or bow*] down here before thee, and worſhipping thee, deſire to cloſe this day with thee, and in thy peace and fear.

Thy good hand has carried me through the Buſineſs and Dangers of the day; and bleſſed be thy Holy Name, thy Fatherly care and loving kindneſs for it. Thou, O Lord, art never wanting unto me, but I am wanting evermore to thy Grace and my ſelf. How many

many have been this day the Errors of my waies ** How have I come ſhort of thy glory, and my own Duty? [In **] I do, O God from my Soul bewail all: Now behold me I beſeech thee in thy Son Chriſt Jeſus. In him, O Lord, Hear; O Lord, Forgive, and cauſe thy Face to ſhine upon thy Servant. Lay me to my reſt ſprinkled with the Blood of him my Saviour, in holy joy and peace, and in the comfortable hopes of a Bleſſed Reſurrection at the laſt day. Make my ſleep this night ſweet, and holy; and when I awake, let me ſtill be with thee. Raviſh my Soul with thy love, and enlarge my Heart in longing deſires after thee, and ſerious delight in thee, and in the holy company of Heaven. Prepare me, O Lord, for my long ſleep;

Part II. Chap. 11.

or do but grant unto me that I may be found watchful, and prevent it, if thou pleaſeſt, with thy coming.

Gather together, O God, all thy Church, and till the fulneſs thereof ſhall be come in, purifie, pacifie, and defend all parts of it. Let thine Eyes be ever open for good on this part of it into which thou haſt caſt thy Servant; and eſpecially on him, who under thee, is the Defender of it. Keep, guide, and govern him, and all who in Church or State govern under him. Bleſs and reward my Friends: Pardon and turn mine Enemies. Help the Helpleſs, Receive into thy protection this night me and all my Relations, &c. Keep us all good Lord unto thy Heavenly Kingdom, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour. *Amen.*

Our Father, &c. Theſe

These Prayers are so short as that they may be easily committed to memory, and so will become the readier and fitter for use in any of the supposed Exigences. But let them not be an occasion to Idleness or Spiritual Negligence.

Part

PART III.

Of more ſolemn Retirement into the Cloſet upon *Holy-days* and *Sundays.*

CHAP. I.

That private devotions ſhould be greater on Holy-days, *than on ordinary days. The end of* Feſtivals, *and their Vindication from abuſe and Cavils.*

THat upon Holy-days or Feſtivals we ought to be more taken up in devotion, than on other days, there is no men I preſume will

will deny, except they be so factious as to slight the Institutions, or so sensual as not to understand the end and design of them.

It is as uncharitable as unreasonable a Part to conclude, because they bear the name ordinarily of certain Saints and Martyrs, that therefore the days were superstitiously consecrated to the mere honour of those Saints. The design of the Church in this Institution seems to me only thus much.

First, That Almighty God might have particular glory for all the particular parts and degrees of the work of our redemption (the *Incarnation*, *Circumcision*, *Passion*, *Resurrection*, &c. of our *Saviour*:) as likewise for all those his *Servants*, by whose *Doctrine* and *Examples*, whether in life or death, his holy *Gospel* hath been *planted* and *confirmed*. Then, 2. That there might be due *commemoration* of such particular persons, and of the graces in which they did excel, as well to the end, that their examples (at least) might be an immortal incitement to vertue, and

Part III. Chap. I.

they being dead might yet thus ſpeak; as that vertue might have its deſerved honour, which for the enforcement of like worthy practices upon others, comes not at all too late, though it be given to the aſhes of the vertuous.

And that theſe two, to wit, giving *particular honour to God*, and the *propagation of vertue*, were the *main aims* of the Church, ſeems to be undeniable, if we do conſider either the particular Collects on thoſe days, or that clauſe in the Prayer *for the Eſtate of Chriſt's Church Militant*, towards the end, (*We bleſs thy name for all thy ſervants departed this life in thy faith and fear, beſeeching thee to give us grace to follow their good examples*, &c.) which prayer, we know, is one part of the Service of the Church upon every Feſtival, and both this and the forementioned Collects expreſly profeſs as much as we affirm.

Now theſe, as they cannot be rejected by any ſober men, (and ſo the end being right, and the power juſt,

juſt, and the thing it ſelf as juſt, (which two laſt, becauſe I ſee no reaſon for the queſtioning them, I let paſs without any other proof, than the evidence which they carry with them) it cannot be ſeen how the inſtitution ſhould be amiſs, wherefore the factious have an anſwer:) ſo they are directly fruſtrated by thoſe, who look upon Feſtivals as merely a time of Liberty, and ſo many days devoted to pleaſure or idleneſs. I will not ſay, but that both the Church and State, in ſettling theſe Inſtitutions by Law, might have ſome aim at allowing ſervants, and thoſe who live a ſervile life, ſome reſt and time for lawful recreations, which ſometimes the covetouſneſs of ſome Maſters, ſometimes ſome perſons own covetouſneſs would not allow them: (And this is juſtifiable even by the practice of God himſelf in the fourth Commandment, *that thy ſervant may reſt*, &c.) But that it was never either the Churches or States intention, that they ſhould wholly be ſpent to this purpoſe, I do affirm:

Part. III. Chap. 1.

and for proof hereof, *at home*, alledg our Laws, which enjoyn all on ſuch days to reſort to places of publick worſhip for the ſervice of God; and *abroad*, the Imperial Conſtitution. *We will not that Holy-days, which are conſecrate to the ſupreme Majeſty, be imployed or ſpent upon pleaſures.* And it would be a right pious work, and as much for the vindication of Feſtivals as any other, if Magiſtrates would, according as I am ſure they may, puniſh thoſe, who uſe to ſpend whole Holy-days in their pleaſures (dancing, hunting, runnings, foot-bals, *&c.*) by the legal mulct for abſence from Divine Service.

Vid. God. de Feriis.

But may no recreation then be taken upon Holy-days? I do not ſay, nor intend that: nor doth, I preſume, the Law, neither new, or old. For the reſt, and (if by the reſt we will underſtand any thing but a dull idleneſs) the refreſhment of labourring perſons being one thing which by the way was deſigned in their Inſtitution, plain it is, that lawful recreations, as they are exerciſes of re-

refreſhment, may on them be uſed. But as to ſuch recreations, which ſhall ſupplant or thruſt out the whole Service of God on thoſe daies, which ſervice is the main end to which the Feſtivals were ordain ed, I ſee not how they can without ſin be frequented, practiſed or tolerated: I am ſure our Eccleſiaſtical Laws tolerate them not. Part III. Chap. 1.

Further, I preſume the ſenſe which the fourth Commandment in common equity bears, enforceth as much as I preſs: For that enjoyning a Jew to ſanctifie the ſeventh day, that is, the time which by their Law was ſet apart to the worſhip of God, will alſo (at leaſt) in equity and reaſon enjoyn a Chriſtian to ſanctifie ſuch times, as their Laws have conſecrated to the Divine worſhip: which Laws touching the particular ſetting apart of times to the worſhip of God, though they are not all extant in Scripture, nor immediately delivered by the mouth of God, yet being made by them, whom he, to whom *all power both in Heaven and Earth was given*, hath commiſſio-

Part III. Chap. I.

missionated and made his delegates (to wit, his Apostles and their successors, the governours of the Church) cannot be looked upon as altogether humane, but have a certain stamp of Divinity; according as ordinarily we interpret the commands of the King's officers, in such things wherein they are commissionated, to be the Kings commands. Now, that Holy-days were ordained by the lawful governours of the Church, is too evident to be denied. And, I should not fear to say, that some of our present Feasts were at the least observed by some of the * Apostles, our Saviour's immediate Substitutes. How therefore can we neglect to sanctifie such times, which are thus consecrated to God, that is, not imploy them to those separate uses, to which they were appointed (which is the meaning of sanctifying in this regard, in Scripture) without the unhallowing *holy* or *devoted* things, or without the evident breach of this Commandment?

Act. 20. 16 *Vid. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. 5. cap 22. 23. & de vita Const. l. 3. c. 17. &c.*

I will add no more to this purpose,

pose, but that every one being bound to proportion his time for his devotion, according to the opportunities and leisure which he hath, and it being unlawful by the very municipal law, or law of the Land (for such is the Ecclesiastical law in this case) totally to follow the work of my calling on Festivals or Holy-days, I cannot but have more leisure on them for the service of God; and therefore consequently a greater portion of it is to be spent in my devotions. Which being concluded, as most lawfully and rightfully it may in general, what hath been said holds as well concerning private as publick devotions. I ought therefore to think my self bound on every Holy-day to somewhat more of devotion in private, than what every day calls for.

Part III. Chap. 2.

CHAP. II.

What there ſhould be of new in our private devotions upon Holy-days.

THE queſtion now will be, what that is of new, which Feſtivals may ſeem properly to require of a Chriſtian in his Cloſet-devotions.

To which it muſt be ſaid, that as to the general ſubſtance of my devotions, it can ſcarce be other at any time, than what hath been already delivered, to wit, *Reading*, *Meditation and Prayer*. But yet each of theſe may be imployed a while upon ſome new ſpecialty, or particular matter which that day's occaſion and ſolemnity directs unto, to wit, upon the life or vertues of that particular Saint or Martyr, whoſe memory the day celebrates: or if the day be ſuch which was intended only to praiſe God for ſome particular tranſaction relating to our redemption (as the *Nativity* of our Lord, his *Circumciſion*, *&c.*) to

to bend my devotions thitherward. To this purpoſe it may be proper, beſides what I read in Holy Scripture that day by my conſtant courſe, (which ſhould not at any time, except upon evident neceſſity, or very conſiderable buſineſs, be broken) to read thoſe particular portions of Scripture which are by the Church appointed for that day; I mean the *Epiſtle* and *Goſpel* for the day. And theſe being read over with ſuch care as is before preſcribed, to ſpend ſome time according to the former rules in Meditation upon them: and then, either to my own prayers to take in the Collect of the day, or to add ſome other petitions and praiſes, as my Chriſtian diſcretion ſhall judge ſeaſonable. To this imployment if I allot an hour (or if need ſo require half an hour) beſides what I ordinarily on other days ſpend on my devotions, the work may in ſome good meaſure be done. And it cannot be thought, but ſo much time may well be ſpared, by reaſon of that leiſure and reſt which the Law on that day enjoyns me.

Part III. Chap 2.

CHAP. III.

An Exemplification or practice of the former rules in Christmas-day, with a fit Prayer to be added to my ordinary Prayers upon that day.

NOW because all the directions given will be better understood, and rendred more easily practicable to the plainest, if a little exemplified, a pattern or two shall be set down of what there should be of new in our devotions on Festivals, and those so framed, as that they may serve not only for instances in this last case, but for examples of practice to those formerly given rules touching *Reading* and *Meditating*.

And first for such Feasts which celebrate the memory of some particular in, or step to, our redemption.

Amongst these the copy shall be in *Christmas days*. (The Epistle *Hebr.*

Hebr. 1. ver. 1. to ver. 13.) Which having carefully read over, I cannot but obſerve (according to my firſt rule in Meditation) that the holy Ghoſt's deſign is to expreſs the glory of our Saviour, and eſpecially his eminence above any, and all the Angels (which are yet the moſt glorious part of the creation) And this glory of his is expreſſed to be ſo eminent, not only in reſpect of his Divine nature, as he is the expreſs Image of his Father's perſon, but alſo as he is God-man, as having been born in our nature, *and purged our ſins, he ſat down on the right hand of the Majeſty on high.* So that the very humane nature of our Saviour, how ever contemptible it might ſeem once to be, is now advanced infinitely above the *Angels*, *all the Angels being to worſhip* The incarnate Son of God, *And his Throne being eſtabliſhed for ever.*

Now there being in all this no conſiderable matter of difficulty which offers it ſelf, I have no need here to apply my ſecond rules (touching ſearching into difficulties); and there-

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therefore I proceed to the third, to consider what I am the better for having read this. The substance of it I have already gathered in the practice of my first rule: that reviewing, to gain light to the particular parts, I find by the second verse my self instructed and confirmed in that point of my *faith*, the *Eternity of the Second Person*, or the Son's being from everlasting: For it is said *that God by his Son made the Worlds*, that is, (as I may probably conclude) all things that are. His Son then was before the *Worlds*, that is, from Eternity.

Again that admirable expression (*the brightness of the Father's glory, and express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power*) what a glorious representation is it of the Son's *Deity*, and being distinct but not separate from his eternal father? according as the brightness of glory may be conceived as distinct from the glory, of which it is the brightness, but never can be apart from that glory.

Again that following expression

after

(*after he had by himſelf purged our ſins ſat down at the right hand of the Majeſty on high*) with what an heavenly emphaſis doth it ſet out, Part. III. Chap. 3.

1. The fulneſs of the atonement made by Chriſt as to every faithful perſon: *by himſelf he purged our ſins*: and how can they not be pure before the Father, whoſe ſins his only Son by himſelf has purged?

2. The tranſcendency of our Saviour's glorification (*He ſat down at the right hand of Majeſty on high*) What a bleſſed (ὑψος or) *height* is here to expreſs it! and how doth the very expreſſion affect the conſidering mind! *he ſat down at the right of the Majeſty on high*: methinks I could ſay it an hundred times over with new admiration and diſſolution of ſoul. It ſecretly inſinuates alſo, what ſhall be our future glory, when we ſhall be like unto him, *and ſit down with him at the right hand of the ſame Majeſty*. More of the ſame nature might be noted, but this is ſufficient to exemplifie the Rules.

I proceed now to conſider the Goſpel which I alſo am ſuppoſed to have read. (Goſpel, *John* 1. ver. 1.

to

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to 15.) The ſcope and ſubſtance of this Goſpel ſeems to be this, that our Lord Jeſus being God, ever bleſſed with the Father, in time took upon him our nature to redeem us; and that *John the Baptiſt* was a witneſs hereof.

But here are ſeveral expreſſions which ſeem to contain ſome matter of faith touching our Saviour, and yet I do not perfectly underſtand them. Wherefore if I have any help (as before directed to, by the ſecond Rule touching Meditation upon Scripture) I conſult that touching this whole portion of Scripture. Which having conſulted I may be ſuppoſed in ſome tolerable meaſure to underſtand what is contain'd therein neceſſary to be believed. If I have no ſuch book or help then I muſt make as good ſhift as I can: and conſidering the ſcope and drift of the place before mentioned, and every particular expreſſion at which I ſtick, I interpret that which I doubt of, with a regard to, and by the light I can take from, what I underſtand. Thus having the general

ſcope

ſcope of this Scripture in my mind, I review it, or conſider it again in the order as it lyes. Nothing do I meet with, which I do not in a good meaſure underſtand, till I come to ver. 4. & 5. (For having obſerved at the firſt reading, that (ver. 14.) the Apoſtle ſaith the *Word was made fleſh*, by the *Word* in the 1. verſe I can underſtand nothing but the eternal Son of God) In *him was life, and the life was the light of men.* What life? or how is the life the light of men? I conſider that the holy Ghoſt is here ſpeaking of the Deity of the Son, and in the third verſe aſcribes the making of all things to him. Then it follows *In him was life.* It is very likely that the meaning hereof is thus much. *He is the fountain of life*, he made as well the things which live, as thoſe which do not. He communicated life to all living. *And the life was the light of men*; It is very likely, that life is here to be underſtood of that natural life, which all men whatſoever live: for he ſpeaks of Chriſt as the Creator of all living. Now whereas

it

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it is ſaid, that this *life is the light of men*, or that that life, which men do partake of from God, is light; haply the meaning hereof may be, that the life which the Creator gave to man was a more lightſome (that is, a more intelligent) life, than what the reſt of living creatures here below partake of; to wit, a rational life. Now it follows, *The light ſhined in darkneſs, and the darkneſs comprehendeth it not.* It is very likely that by *light* I muſt underſtand in this verſe, what I did thereby in the former, to wit, Reaſon: and as to the next word, whoſe meaning I doubt, namely, *Darkneſs*, conſidering darkneſs is oppoſite to light, I enquire with my ſelf, what in man is contrary or oppoſite to Reaſon, and I find Senſe, or Senſuality to be its oppoſite, ſo that weighing all more attently, at length I gueſs, that ſome ſuch thing as this is the import of that verſe.

The natural *light* of man's *reaſon ſhone*, in his *corrupt* and *ſenſual nature*, but that nature followed not the dictates of it: Men rejected what their

their reaſon would have guided them to chuſe. And this, being that I was led thereto by conſidering the drift of the words, and find now that the words will to my beſt judgment very well bear, I conceive may probably be the meaning of this Place.

But here it may be very neceſſary to admoniſh, eſpecially ordinary people, that they proceed not too far upon their own judgments in interpreting darker places of Scripture, of which, this haply may ſeem one. We have only, in what we have ſaid, ſhewn the beſt way, which can be taken for the finding out the ſenſe of Scripture. But if ſo be, that uſing this method I particularly could not have found out ſo much touching the ſenſe of this Scripture, as hath been above declared, yet had not either my reading or my meditation been fruitleſs. I could very well and very profitably have reſted in this, that I obſerved theſe verſes to teſtifie to me, that Chriſt is God, and by him all things were made; and that from him

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him came life, and all the light, which in life men have. And thus much by observation, a plain person might have found from hence. But usually I say, plain persons will do best, not to trust the strength of their own reason, which commonly is none of the best Judge of consequences and dependances, but rather get to themselves such helps as above directed to, and follow their wholsome guidance.

Well: having found out as I conceive thus much of the meaning of this Scripture, if there be any thing else I doubt of in that part of it which remains, I proceed to consider it, carrying still in my mind the scope of the whole, and thus much as I have learnt of the sense of the former part. The substance of the remaining part seems to me thus much, That when it pleased the *Word to be made flesh* (that is, the Son of God to take upon him our nature, and in that nature to dwell) *John the Baptist* was sent for a witness to testifie, that this was the *true light*, to the end that *men might* believe

lieve: And to as many of mankind as did believe upon, and receive this light, this light (himself being the eternal and natural Son of God) gave the priviledge, right or power to become through him the Sons of God, being now born unto a new (*viz.* a godly) life by their receiving him. Now here it may be (as I look through the particular verses) are one or two things more of moment which I doubt of, and touching which I will consult the best helps I have, or otherwise consider with as much attention and modesty as I can.

First, In what sense should Christ be termed the *true light?*

This considering of, I remember, that before there was mention of a certain *light* which all men did partake from the *Word* as created by him (to wit, their Reason) and this light, though it shone in them, yet, as the first man did not follow its Splendor, so the rest did reject its guidance; and *the darkness received*, or *comprehended it not*. But now it is said, *that the word*, that is *Christ made*

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made flesh is the *true light*: both which considering together, the import of all seems to be this, That whereas the natural light of reason, being not comprehended, but rather overcome by the darkness of man's corrupt nature, was insufficient, of it self, to lead man unto his salvation or true happiness, and being sophisticated by the same corruption, had led him to seek happiness in many false and by-paths; Jesus Christ came into the world to shew the true way to happiness, and so was the *true light*.

From whence also I begin to see somewhat into the second passage which I doubted of, to wit, what should be the meaning of that [*as many as received him*]: For, considering how the Evangelist in the verses immediatly foregoing speaks of Christ, to wit, as the *true light*, I easily see, that to receive him is to imbrace him as the light, and so to apply my self to those holy wayes which he hath discovered, alone to lead unto happiness. Which also the following words further intimate

[*them*

[*them that believe in his name*] that is them who by their imbracing the diſcovery which he hath made, and doing accordingly, do manifeſt that they are perſuaded he is the true light: which thing they do, not as they are born by *the will of man*, of fleſh and blood (for *the darkneſs comprehendeth not the light*) but as begotten, or created over again by God hereto.

So then now I conceive I underſtand the *Goſpel for this day*, and all the moſt concerning particulars in it. The ſubſtance of it therefore I recollect after this my ſearch, to the end it may ſink the better into me, and I be the better verſt hereafter in this Scripture. And that is this, That *Chriſt* being eternally God, was alſo together with God (with whom he ever was) the Creator of all things, and particularly of man; that man in his recreation received a certain light (*viz.* his reaſon) which he oppoſed and overcame, rather than followed; that therefore it pleaſed Chriſt to be made man, and coming into the world to diſcover

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discover the true way to happiness unto degenerate man; and as many of mankind, who embraced this discovery, and manifested their belief of Christ's being the *true light*, by their receiving him as such, he restored into the blessed state of being the Sons of God (as *Adam* was before his fall.) And of all this *John the Baptist* was sent before to be a witness, that by his testimony men might be prepared to believe in this *true light*.

Luk. 3. 38.

Thus much then I am improved in point of knowledg. But is there nothing which may be further useful to me as to practicals? No promise of mercy? No threat of punishment to any? Nothing to quicken me to any duty? There is surely.

First, That is a remarkable expression, *As many as received him, to them he gave power to become the Sons of God.* I cannot expect ever to be by my incarnate Lord made a Son of God, and Heir with him in the Kingdom of his Father, except I receive him as the *true light*, except I look for happiness by the method by

by him delivered, a holy Christian practice, according to his Gospel. I see therefore hence the necessity of being conformable to all the Commands of the Gospel. *He is salvation to none to whom he is not light*; If therefore I am not faithful, meek, charitable, holy, &c. as the Gospel directs, salvation it self will not save me. Part III. Chap. 3.

Further, Both the Epistle and Gospel put me in mind of, what the day celebrates, the Incarnation of our Saviour (at least his visible Incarnation, for to the eye he was not Incarnate till born.) *The Word was made flesh*, and so himself spake unto us, *and by himself he purged our sins. The Word*, who was that? *The Son of God, the brightness of his Father's glory, the express Image of his person, he who was ever with God and ever God, heir of all things, by whom all things were made*, he *was made flesh: O the depth of the love of God and Christ!* Whose soul can well hold to contemplate it?

Besides this admiration, and dissolution of soul, the thoughts hereof cannot

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cannot but be thus further useful to me.

First, Seeing from what an infinite Glory, to what a mean nature and condition, the Son of God (himself the infinite God) stooped for the help and saving of men, I cannot but see my self in duty bound to the like humility, meekness and condescention; not to stand upon mine own petty interests, and consult nothing but self, when I have opportunity to do good to any inferior that wants my succour. Had Christ done so, he had never been made flesh for me. Now *let the same mind be in me, which was also in Christ Jesus.*

And again, Seeing to what an height of excellency the nature of mankind is now advanced, it should prevail with me to put a due price upon it, and never willingly to dishonour by any unworthy action, what God himself hath so honoured. Did God stoop to vindicate my nature from the contempt and tyranny of the devil, and shall I notwithstanding all the condescentions of his grace

grace, ſtill wilfully enſlave and deſtroy my ſelf?

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Further, God having united the nature, of which I am a partner, to him, I ſhould be ambitious of all means of uniting my ſelf to him, that is, of doing all that may be on my part to further this union.

And eſpecially, the thoughts hereof ſhould quicken me this day to a zealous participating his body and blood. Can I conſider God made fleſh for me, God debaſing himſelf to be one with me, and is it poſſible that I can neglect, what is ſo much for my honour and intereſt, the means of being made bone of his bone, and fleſh of his fleſh? How can I eſteem my ſelf duly to have celebrated the memory of his being made fleſh, if having means of partaking of that fleſh which he took, I neglect it? And how much of ingratitude muſt ſuch neglect have in it?

Laſtly, Seeing that one great end of our Saviours being incarnate was, to be *the true light* to man in the purſuit of his happineſs, let me ac-

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count it a noble degree of assimilation or being like my Saviour, If I can in the least measure be a light to any herein. And if God have by office made me such, let me prize and honour my imployment, and manifest my value of it by my diligence in it. *The more light I give, the nearer do I in my office come unto my Saviour.*

Thus much then of incitement have I hence to my duty. My other rules are not here so applicable: Wherefore in the conclusion of my Meditations, I consider what of new all that I have meditated, doth suggest unto this day's prayers: And that I shall { Praise. find to be matter of { Petition.

As to the first,

1. The infinite goodness of God, that he would at all think of restoring that nature, which was now an enemy to him, having wilfully fallen from him, cannot, if duly considered, but melt my heart into thankful praise of him.

2. That (yet) greater commendation of his goodness, his infinite

nite condeſcenſion, his redeeming our nature in a way ſo glorious to it, as was the aſſumption of it unto his own nature, methinks ſhould overcome my ſoul, and wrap it into an extaſie of praiſe and admiration. In all likelihood, infinite wiſdom might have thought of a courſe, which would have been leſs honourable to man, and would not ſo much (if I may ſo ſpeak) have humbled the Deity. But *he would not bring us to glory ingloriouſly.* The mere conſideration therefore of the honour which our Lord's Incarnation puts upon our ill deſerving nature, will not ſuffer me to be ſilent this day in his praiſes.

And as to matter of Petition, ſurely it cannot but be right ſeaſonable to beſeech, 1. That all this may not be in vain unto me: And 2. That to that end, I may tranſcribe theſe Copies of goodneſs, humility, and purity, which ſhone in our Saviour's Incarnation, and walk in the *light*, as well of his *example*, as *doctrine*. And all this I may do in ſome ſuch words as theſe.

Part. III. Chap. 3.

A Prayer to be added to my other daily Prayers on Christmas-day.

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; who out of thy mere goodness and pity, having promised thy Son to redeem fain mankind, didst in the fulness of time faithfully perform with thine hand what thou hadst spoken with thy mouth, and send him into the world made, and as about this time born, of a woman: I, one of that redeemed, though vile nature, humbly adore this thy Grace and faithfulness. Eternity, Lord, is too little to bless thee for it. But Eternal praise is the greatest that I can wish thee: and mayst thou to Eternity receive due glory for this thine infinite Goodness and mercy. O

O thou the only begotten Son, *by whom* thine eternal Father *made the Worlds*; who waſt ever with God, and ever God, the *brightneſs of his Glory, and expreſs Image of his Perſon*, yet waſt pleaſed in time to be made fleſh, and pitch thy Tabernacle in our nature: I, part of the purchaſe of thy blood, poor duſt and aſhes, (but ſuch as thine infinite Glory was pleaſed for my ſake once to wear, and now to glorifie, and ſet above Angels) moſt humbly bleſs thee, as well for this thy condeſcenſion, as for the honour done to man. *Thou tookeſt not upon thee the nature of Angels, but the ſeed of* Abraham *thou didſt take.* Even ſo, O Saviour, for ſo it hath ſeemed good to thee. Thou thoughteſt not the Angelical nature low enough for thine Infinity to

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ſtoop to. Moſt dear Jeſus, thou haſt overcome me. I would praiſe thee, but I cannot further. —Accept my ſilent raviſhment, admiration, and faith. *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief.*

O Holy Spirit, the power of the moſt High, who, after an vnconceivable ſort overſhadowing the Virgin Mother, didſt frame in her ſacred Womb that Holy Thing, which * was called the Son of God; for this thy moſt wonderful and fearful (but to man moſt happy) operation, I unworthy man moſt humbly bleſs thee: beſeeching thee to inſpire my heart, that I may from this bleſſed Copy tranſcribe theſe Vertues of Goodneſs, Humility, Love, Purity, and whatſoever elſe mine holy Saviour

* *That is*, was the Son of God. *For in Scripture many times* being called and being (word *and* thing) *are one and the ſame.*

our, either by his *Life* or *Doctrine* hath *taught* me: that ſo I walking in his *light*, he may be to me *life* everlaſting, to the praiſe of thee, O Father, Son, and holy Spirit, one undivided God Eternally. *Amen.*

CHAP. IV.

An Exemplification of the former Rules in St. Stephen's *day: With a Prayer which may be uſed on any Saint's day.*

FOR the Epiſtle, *Acts* 7. *v.* 55. to the end. Which, having read, I find to be a narrative, or relation of St. *Stephen*'s Martyrdom. And the chief ſubſtantials, that my thoughts fix upon are, that encouraging *viſion* vouchſafed to him, in his entrance upon his ſuffering, and the *manner of his taking his ſuffering.*

Part III. Chap 4.

St. *Stephen*, the first of those who were to pass to Heaven in the fiery Chariot of a violent death, for the witness of Jesus, was now as good as sentenced: for the defence, which he had made, had only further incensed his persecutors. But he, who should make the first tryal of so bold a passage, had need of some more than ordinary encouragment: It pleased therefore him, whose Witness he was, to command away the Clouds, and through the opened Heavens to shew himself standing at the right hand of God, ready to receive him thither. And seeing the passage now so clear, and the end so glorious, it was not likely that good *Stephen* should stumble at a stone or two. *This method doth the gracious providence of God observe, that where he gives a bitterer cup, there he secretly provides greater encouragements*, and thereby raiseth the strength of his suffering servants.

Answerable to his encouragement do I find St. *Stephen*'s carriage. For being *cast out of the City*, and now to be *stoned*, all is so far from daunting

daunting him, that it ſcarce ſeems to have diſturbed him; for he readily *prays* to his Saviour both in his own and his murtherer's behalfe. Particularly, theſe vertues I cannot but obſerve livelily ſhining in him ſuffering. Part. III. Chap. 4.

1. Conſtancy, Reſolution and Chriſtian Magnanimity in thoſe ſufferings, which a truly Chriſtian cauſe ingaged him in. 2. Notwithſtanding all his extraordinary aſſurances of glory, (Chriſt witneſſing it to him from Heaven in that bleſſed Viſion) perſeverance in earneſt prayers to the laſt. When the ſtones now ſtruck him, he called upon God and ſaid, *&c.* 3. Quietneſs, patience and ſerenity: The Injuſtice of his ſufferings exaſperates not his Spirit, nor puts him in any paſſion or indiſpoſition for his duty. 4. Meekneſs, Charity, Forgiveneſs, even towards them, who in that they were enemies to him, were enemies alſo to Chriſt. He *kneeled down* [An expreſſion of the ſolemnity of his Prayers] *and cryed with a loud voice* [an expreſſion of the earneſtneſs

Part III. Chap. 4.

neſtneſs and fervour of them.] *Lord lay not this ſin to their charge.* A petition of moſt diſcreet piety, and zealous charity. All make up a pattern moſt worthy imitation in ſuffering.

A double benefit then the ſubſtance of this portion of Scripture (recollected according to direction) yields to me. The firſt an Antidote or Remedy againſt dejection under, and ſlaviſh fear of ſuffering.

If God at any time call me to the bearing a greater weight of affliction than ordinary, let me not baſely or ſinfully decline it, but rather remember what St. *Stephen* (and indeed all the Children of God have found by experience, that ſtrength ſhall be given in proportionably, and that ſuitable to my miſery ſhall comfort and refreſhment come to ſuſtain my ſpirit, if I nobly engage. Secondly, St. *Stephen*'s example is to me a copy how I ought to ſuffer. Hence ſhould I tranſcribe, Conſtancy, Dutifulneſs, Patience, Charity, and whatever other vertues I can obſerve him to have excerciſed in his ſufferings.

Now

Now as to particular expreſſions here, that which concludes the relation cannot well paſs without notice. *And when he had ſaid this he fell aſleep*: In ſweetneſs and love he breathed out his ſoul; and dying ſo, pity it was, but that to ſo ſweet a ſoul death it ſelf ſhould be ſweetned, and ſo it was: *He fell aſleep.* It teacheth me how I am to look on death. To all men death is but a ſleep: good or bad, they muſt awake from it. But a good man's death ſhould be look'd upon only as a *falling aſleep*, or as another Scripture ſaith, *Reſting from his labours*: Death is much the eaſieſt to good men.

Of theſe notes or remarks, which I have thus in my Meditations on this Reading made, thoſe which I have a mind chiefly to faſten upon my ſelf (though I would not forget any) are theſe which follow, of which therefore I regiſter in my *Memorial* ſome hints, perhaps ſo as follows.

" St. *Stephen's* day, 1664.
" *Acts* 7.

" *Verſe*

Part. III. Chap. 4.

"*Verſe* 54, 55. God ever pro-"portions his Servant's comforts "to their ſufferings.

"*Verſe* 60. *He fell aſleep*. How "ſweetly do good men die! Alſo "a fit Petition to uſe when I pray "for enemies; *Lord, lay not this ſin to "their charge.*

"I noted all along in St. *Stephen* "theſe Chriſtian Graces. 1. Con-"ſtancy and Courage. 2. Perſeve-"rance in prayer, notwithſtand-"ing the immediate revelation "of his inſtant Glory. 3. Patience. "4. Charityand Forgiveneſs.

This pattern will ſerve for direction in what we ordinarily intend; and it is brief, becauſe it is ſuppoſed a pattern to be followed in what we in daily courſe obſerve or ſet down. But if on Holy-days, any have a mind to be larger in their ſetting down their Meditations, this hinders not.

The Goſpel, *Matt.* 23. *v* 34. to the end.

Obſerving the ſcope of this Scripture, I find it to be a prophecy of the diſmal calamity, which ſhould befal the *Jews* by reaſon of their wilful

ful rejecting of the Gospel, and cutting off them, who were sent to preach it, according as their stubborn fore-fathers had cut of the Prophets. A judgment should befal them, which should be in some measure a proportionable revenge of all the righteous blood, which had been *shed from Abel to Zachary*: and this by reason that they did persist in shedding such righteous blood; as they indeed did in case of our Saviour, and his persecuted followers. Their City therefore should become a desolation, and the very worship of God being laid waste, they should expect the Messiah so long, that they should even bless him, that could tell them any thing of him. Part III. Chap. 4. Ver. 35.

This is the general substance of this Scripture. Difficulty in it I find none to stop me: I proceed therefore to inquire, what of advantage I can make by the reading of it according to my proposed course: And, 1. I find my self, by the observing the two first verses of it, much satisfied touching one case, in which

Part. III. Chad. 4.

which I have many times thought God to deal very hardly, to wit, touching his visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children. *Verse* 35. It is said, that upon that generation should fall *all the righteous blood spilt from Abel to Zachary*, which, at the first look seems very severe. But the reason is rendered *ver* 34. because of *the Prophets, wise men and scribes, which Christ sent amongst them, some they would kill and crucifie, some scourge in their Synagogues, others persecute from City to City*, according as their forefathers ever had served the Prophets: Which gives me ground to conclude: *That children seldom or never inherit their fathers punishments*, or the wrath due to their fathers sins, *but where they first prove inheritors of those sins*: And in this case, because commonly they have seen or heard of as well their fathers sins, as the punishments which have befallen their fathers for those sins, and yet not mended by their Examples, it is but justice, that their fathers sins should be visited upon them, that is, that they

they ſhould have the ſame or like puniſhments as their fathers had, and greater. Part III. Chap. 4.

Then, 2. I cannot but note, how ſlowly and unwillingly God comes to judgment. Thus much thoſe words, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem*, ſuggeſt to me. Our Saviour, I ſee, cannot foretel this deſertion and rejection of the *Jews* without a lamentation taken up, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem.* So unwilling is he to puniſh, that he even weeps at the very thoughts of it. This is a very affecting conſideration, and of ſpecial force to quicken me to repentance, and is therefore to be noted to that purpoſe.

Laſtly, Examining further, according to the rules propoſed, whether there be no inſtance of God's judgments againſt ſinners, no threat to deter me from any ſin, or the like, I find there is, and cannot but ſtay my thoughts a while upon this heavy denunciation of woe againſt thoſe, who were outwardly God's own people, for their rejecting the offers of Grace, and upon fooliſh prejudices

Part II. Chap. 4.

prejudices not acknowledging, or not being willing to see the light, which yet they could not but see. *And if God spared not the natural branches, how much less will he spare me, who am only grafted in out of the wild olive, if I be guilty of the same sin?* It concerns me therefore in this case to look into my self: the very reading of this Scripture ought to be to me a warning. And let me see: Am not I guilty of the like *resisting light* and *rejecting grace?* What do I else when I sin presumptuously, and only not *wilfully?* Do not I then shut mine eyes against the light and offer violence to the convictions which come from those Scriptures, whose Authors, the *Jews*, were rejected for offering violence unto? They rejected their living testimony: I, not only that (for that I have recorded in the Scripture); but the very voice of their blood, by which they sealed the truth of their testimony. Oh sinful and ungracious wretch!

Rom. 11. 12.

Now if any such as this be my case; let my meditations here rest a while. Let me consider whether in

in this Scripture, which hath thus convinced me of my ſin, there be not ſomewhat which may reclaim me. And truly there is. 1. (That which hath already been mentioned, God's unwillingneſs to puniſh, his patience and forbearance. And hath not this been great towards me? How often have the warm offers of love and pardon invited me, as they did them? May not I ſay, God would have many a time *gathered me under his wings*? And do not theſe very warnings, that if I am not reclaimed, I muſt be forſaken, ſpeak God's preſent unwillingneſs (if any thing will work) to forſake me? Is not this as much as an *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem*? Again, 2. I here ſee that though God bore long with his people, he would not bear always, being that they did perſiſt in reſiſtance of his Grace. And truly I know not how ſoon God may call home from me his oppoſed Spirit, and ſuffering his Grace no longer to be abuſed, leave me, as he did the *Jews*, in my own ſtubbornneſs and wilfulneſs to periſh.

After

Part. III. Chap. 4.

After this sort may I imploy a while my thoughts; and if time will suffer, thus ought I so long to meditate, till my moved heart have taken up full resolutions of following the guidance of Gods Spirit, and yielding to his Grace. And these warnings or convictions from the word, together with my resolutions upon them, should I (if able, register in that other of my paper Books, which I call my *Accomptal*, or if not) take such solemn notice of, that I forget not. But if any necessary matter force me to depart my privacy, before my meditations arrive at such a ripeness; yet let me not fail to take notice at least of the warning which I received (and set that down in my accomptal) that so upon my * fasting day, when I review the actions of that week, I may be sure not to forget it, but to humble my self for my former miscarriages, and consider for the future, how I may turn my feet into new ways.

* See Part IV. Chap. 4.

But to return to the devotions of

of this present day: So much only remains now to compleat my present meditations, as to consider, what of new from all will be seasonable to be added to my accustomed Prayers. And here will be,

First, Matter of confession, touching my resisting Grace, and not walking according to the light which I have had.

Secondly, Matter of praise,

1. For these warnings, which are so many calls to repentance, and invitations to happiness.

2. For the testimony which the Gospel received, and doth to this day receive, by the doctrine and death of St. *Stephen*, and for the constancy, faithfulness, patience, charity and meekness, which shone forth in him.

Thirdly, Matter of Petition,

1. For grace, that I may from henceforth yield unto all motions of God's holy Spirit. 2. That whenever God shall call me to suffer (as he doth frequently by the crosses, oppositions, frustrations, *&c.* which

Part III. Chap. 4.

which I meet with in the course of my life, and may do by more severe inflictions or trials, at least Death one way or other will come,) I may manifest the like meekness, patience, charity, holy resolution and mindfulness of God, by prayer and all other seasonable duties. All which having considered, how I may in some sober and orderly way express or represent before God, let me either insert in my wonted prayers; or in some short prayer to be added to them comprise as well as I can. A pattern whereof very particular it will not be so expedient to set down here; but rather so to frame a prayer with some respect to the foregoing heads, as that it may in general be accommodated to, or used upon the Feasts of any Saints or Martyrs.

A ſhort Prayer, which may be added to our ordinary Prayers, upon the feaſt of any Saint or Martyr by our Church appointed to be kept.

O Lord, the God of truth and holineſs, who at ſundry times, and in ſundry ways haſt revealed thy ſelf unto the world, by thy holy Prophets of old, and in theſe laſt days by thy Son, of whom thou haſt ſince in all ages raiſed up thy Saints and Servants to be witneſſes: I humbly bleſs thee, as for all the revelations of thy will, and confirmations of thy truth; ſo eſpecially for the teſtimony given thereunto by the life,

Part III. Chap. 4.

life, and (*a*) doctrine, and (*b*) death, of thy ſervant St. [*S.*] whom thou madeſt unto the world not only a witneſs of thy truth, but a pattern of holineſs: and I beſeech thee to pardon both all my oppoſing, and all my holding in unrighteouſneſs thoſe truths, which either he or any other of thy ſervants have preached, or left on record. I acknowledge and bewail my guiltineſs herein: Keep me, bleſſed Father, for the future (at leaſt) from all ſuch preſumptuous ſins; and grant that the ſame Spirit reſting upon me, which dwelt upon thine antient Saints, and Servants

(*a*) *The word* Doctrine *is chiefly to be uſed upon the feaſts of the bleſſed Apoſtles.*

(b) *If the feaſt be not the memorial of a Martyr, the word* death *is to be left out.*

vants, may beget in me the like humility, charity (**) diligence, resolution and perseverance in all holiness. Let me, as they, both in life and death glorifie thee according to my measure, so that amongst those heavenly Hosts and the blessed Society of thy chosen, I may have some (though it should be the lowest) place eternally to praise and enjoy thee, *O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one most glorious God.* Amen.

* *Here insert the mention of any Christian vertue, in which thou hast observed the Saint, whose memory thou celebratest, to excel.*

CHAP.

Part III. Chap. 5.

CHAP. V.

Of what remains to complete my private Feſtival devotions, to wit, Almes-giving.

SOme time, beſides what my ordinary courſe requires, being thus ſpent in Reading, Meditation, and Prayer, ſuitable to the partilar regard of the day, it only remains to complete my devotions, that according as God hath bleſſed me, I ſet apart ſomewhat for the poor; for it is not certainly my ſelf, or my rich neighbours only, which I am to feaſt upon Holy-days: and however, it may be, I cannot give in my Cloſet, yet I may in my Cloſet, and at the end of my devotion moſt conveniently, chearfully and religiouſly (and it may be, moſt liberally) conſecrate, what I can ſpare, to ſuch pious uſe, by ſeparating it from the reſt, which I reſerve for ordinary uſes. And ſomewhat every Holy-day would I caſt

cast to have thus to consecrate to God, though it were the less: By the observing this course I shall commonly, if not always, have wherewithal to relieve the wants of such, whom I meet with and find to be truly indigent; which, if I do not use my self to some such method, I may haply many times want a stock for. Whether to distribute it in money, or in that which is bought with my money, and may be more suitable to the wants of those whom I relieve, a little Christian discretion will easily direct: and the more to enforce this practice, let me consider how naked, miserable, and stingey, solemn Thankfgiving is, without somewhat of Almes-giving. Then surely I rejoyce in a way most becoming the mercies I and mankind have received, when, as many as I have wherewithal conveniently to help, have cause to rejoyce for my rejoycing: and on the contrary, if being able (by doing but what is my duty, at least what I well may) to revive poor and disconsolate persons, I suf-

Part III. Chap. 5.

Part. III. Chap. 5.

fer them (through my close-handedness) to groan under their distresses upon days of publick joy, what a blemish is it to those days joy? and what want of Christian goodness and charity doth it bespeak in me? I should rather be greedy and ambitious to make all the world rejoyce with me.

Now, for the making at least thus much of Alms-giving an act of my private devotion, no one will, I presume, be dissatisfied, who either considers the premises and the nature of the thing, or what our Saviour saith touching this matter, *Let not thy right hand know what* in this case *thy left hand doth.* Let therefore, I say, my charity crown my devotions: and as I put out that (whatsoever it is) which I have to devote unto God for the relief to his wanting servants, it will not be amiss to use some short ejaculation directed unto his all-seeing Majesty, by which I may express my chearful offering it unto him, that is my setting it apart for the poor, whom he hath commanded me to succour,

Mat. 6. 3.

and

and promiſed me a *bleſſing* if I *conſider*. Now, that may be done in ſome ſuch words as theſe.

O Lord, whoſe is the earth and the fulneſs thereof, I offer unto thee (what, by thy gift and bleſſing, I have) this ſmall teſtimony of my thankfulneſs and duty, to be beſtowed upon thoſe wanting ones, whom thy providence ſhall give me opportunity to relieve. Be thou pleaſed through the blood of my Saviour to accept it, and pardon all my vain expences, *Amen*, *Amen*.

The uſing ſome ſuch courſe, as this propoſed, will make me more liberal in theſe my acts of charity: for how can I offer niggardly to this my bountiful God, when I am conſcious to my ſelf, I have ſomewhat conſiderable, (if I will well husband all) which I may devote to him, and

Part. III. Chap. 5.

yet not abridge my ſelf or mine, either of neceſſaries or conveniencies: and hereto I ſhall be the more quickned, if I remember I offer to God, who both gave me, and keeps account of all I have, and has promiſed to reward openly what ever good he ſees me do in ſecret. Now *whether I may* upon ſuch a day meet with opportunity to my mind, or ſuch a perſon to beſtow it on, as the diſcretion of my charity could wiſh, or whether I cannot, yet let me account it really given to God, and therefore ſeparate it from the reſt of the ſtore; ſo that ever after I may look upon it as devote, and not to be touched, except to diſtribute it to the poor; for I have really, by the prayer above made, devoted and conſecrated it to God. But if any fatal neceſſity ſhould conſtrain the medling with any part of ought thus ſeparated, let me religiouſly obſerve to return it again to the poor mans purſe or ſtock with an expiatory uſury, that is, with ſomewhat more, which may make recompence for my firſt diminiſhing it.

it. And thus we will leave the private devotions of Festivals, and consider in the next place, what will be meet to be performed on the Lords day.

CHAP. VI.

That the Lord's day ought to be kept holy, and what that means.

TOuching the observation of the Lords day, though I judge them indiscreet friends unto it, who refer the institution of it mainly to the fourth Commandment; yet I put the keeping of it holy so far out of all question, that I cannot but account him very unchristian, who either is slighty herein himself, or goes about to possess others, that they may be so without sin.

The true grounds of sanctifying the Lord's day summed up.

(1.) The natural justice of the thing, that there should be some time set apart amongst the Christian community for the publick and solemn worship of God; (2.) The

1 Cor. 16. 1, 2.

antiquity and authority of that Apoſtolick Canon (recorded partly in expreſs terms in Scripture, and (if it were not) ſufficiently manifeſt by their practice) which hath ſet apart this time: (3.) Our Saviours honouring this day with his reſurrection thereupon, which gave occaſion to its being ſet apart; (4.) The cuſtom of all Chriſtian Churches through all ages, and from the very Apoſtles days; (5.) Nay the practice of our Lord himſelf on this day, meeting his aſſembled Diſciples; are all of them arguments beyond contradiction, and *warrant* (ſufficiently) *divine*, that it is to be eſteemed conſecrate or ſet apart to the worſhip of God. And then the force which the fourth Commandment in equity bears, that what time is ſet apart or conſecrated to God ſhould be ſanctified, that is, ſpent to thoſe ſeparate purpoſes and intents, for which it was ſet apart (which I ſay is the meaning of ſanctifying or keeping holy any time) ſufficiently and beyond all evaſion enjoyns its being kept holy; it being ſuppoſed once to be

ſet

ſet apart, as it is before proved to have been. And certainly if as is undeniable, it be the duty of every Chriſtian, as much as may be, to keep all his life as a perpetual *Sabbatiſm* or holy *reſt* unto God) it muſt needs be an argument of a very profane, wordly, and unchriſtian ſpirit, not to afford God this day free from ſenſual pleaſures, and wordly cares or labours. Wherefore, I ſay, the keeping holy of the Lords day, I put out of all queſtion, and would have no man flatter himſelf, that he is a devout Chriſtian, who uſeth, either by *idleneſs* or *pleaſures*, or *unneceſſary wordly buſineſs*, to *prophane* what (the Church, and being that the Church hath done it by good warrant and power tranſmitted to her by Chriſt) God himſelf hath hallowed. *Profanation* I call it: For if the ſpending it to holy purpoſes be to ſanctifie it, then the ſpending it contrarily upon ordinary or unworthy practices, is to prophane it. And if we may not *give that which is holy unto dogs*, it is then ſurely moſt intolerable to

Part. II. Chap. 6.

Heb. 4. 10.

Part III. Chap. 6.

take that time, which by divine Law ought to be holy unto God, and give it to his enemies, the Devil, this World, and our own Lusts; which we do, when we spend the Lord's day either in idleness, pleasures, or needless wordly matters.

Works of *Charity* or *Mercy* are *acts of Holiness*; and works of *Necessity*, so far forth as they are works of necessity, are acts of *mercy*; and consequently the doing of either of these (that is, works of *Charity* or *Necessity*) when due occasion calls me thereto, is rather sanctifying than unhallowing the Lord's day (especially if I do them out of duty towards God, and in his fear) and for this I have his warrant, who tells me, that he better accepts *Mercy than Sacrifice*.

Mat. 9. 13.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of Preparation for the Lord's day. A preparatory Prayer thereto.

SEeing then that the Lord's day is to be kept holy, that is, to be ſpent in the worſhip and ſervice of God, for which it is ſet apart, it concerns me to conſider, how I may ſpend it in a way moſt complying with this its deſign or intendment. And I ſhall eaſily, upon the very conſideration of the nature of Gods worſhip, be convinced, that it is in a manner impoſſible for me duly to ſanctifie it, if I come unto it hot and reaking from my wordly buſineſs. For, being I am to worſhip God in ſpirit and in truth, with all my mind, ſoul, and ſtrength, and, in a word, with my whole man, evident it is, that I am unable ſo to do, while my heart yet remains unemptied of the world: And being unfit to worſhip God, I am not, while ſo, in a

Part. III. Chap. 7.

due ſtate to ſanctifie this day, Wherefore the right ſanctification of the Lord's day is to begin with *Preparation.*

And it is truly a wholeſome inſtitution, that upon the Evening before it, there ſhould be prayers in every Pariſh Church, which is grown now too much into diſuſe, by reaſon only (that I can imagine) of the degeneracy of the age. If there be ſuch a cuſtom kept up in my Pariſh, I would not but upon neceſſity be abſent from thoſe preparatory prayers. At which though I ſhould be ſuppoſed to have been preſent, yet would I not content my ſelf therewith: but, whether I have been imployed publickly in preparations, or not, in my courſe of devotion, on Saturday night, take ſo much more time, than I do ordinarily, as might ſerve for ſome preparatory Meditations and Prayers.

The leaſt which I can do to this purpoſe in my *Meditations*, is, *Firſt*, *To examine* whether there be not ſome ſin or ſad miſcarriage of the week

week past, which lies *unrepented of*, and so may blast my next days performances. And if any there be, *secondly*, to consider of it more particularly, its aggravations, and nature, whether it be not such an one, part of the *Repentance* for which must be *Reconciliation*, *Restitution*, or somewhat like: and accordingly to apply my self to what I in my conscience, and in the fear of God, do judge *due repentance*. *Thirdly*, to endeavour the *emptying my head* of *wordly* (at least distracting) *cares*, to bid them be gone now, till a day for them return: And lastly, so to *contrive* (as near as I can) *all my affairs* for the next day, that both I and my family may have as little *avocations*, or matters to call away our minds from holy duties, as may be. This by way of Meditation.

Part. III. Chap. 7.

See Part 4. Chap. 6. Sect. 4, 5, &c.

My *Prayers* must be suitable to my condition. If any such sin, as before-mentioned, be found, that must be confessed, bewailed, and pardon craved, together with grace for the future against it: which may be done by *putting in the*

mention

Part. III. Chap. 7.

mention of that Sin in the proper *ſpace left* for ſuch purpoſe. But beſides this, it will be neceſſary to add ſome particular petitions for *due preparation* or diſpoſition of heart for the duties of the next day. *Firſt*, for a quiet, ſettled, and compoſed mind, ſo that I may attend, with all my ſoul, my holy concerns or buſineſs. *Secondly*, for enlivened affections, that I may not be dull and heartleſs, but of a tender and melting ſpirit. *Thirdly*, for a pliable, ductile, yielding and eaſie mind, that I may mix the word with faith, and render *the obedience of faith*. *Laſtly*, becauſe both my own and the Congregations benefit and edification much depends upon the Miniſters due and affectionate diſcharge of his office, it is therefore fit that I forget not him, but commend him to the aſſiſtance of the Spirit. To which purpoſe the following prayer may either be inſerted in ſome fit place towards the end of my prayers, or added to them.

O Lord, from whom the preparations of the heart are, the day now approacheth, which being holy unto thee I am to ſpend in thy more ſolemn worſhip. Many ſins there are, by me not duly repented of, which may juſtly bring upon me a curſe inſtead of a bleſſing. [Eſpecially my [* *] may make my very prayers an abomination to thee.] But accept thou, I beſeech thee, of this my confeſſion of them, and (at leaſt deſired) ſorrow for them. Turn my heart from them for the future: and through the blood of my Saviour ſo remove the Guilt of them, that they may not hinder good things from me. Let the,

* *Here inſert the mention of ſuch particular ſins, which thou haſt found thy ſelf guilty of.*

Part III. Chap. 7.

the effuſions of thy grace both upon me and all the Congregations of thy people be ever plentiful. Let my heart be fixed, and none, either vain or worldly, much leſs ſinful thoughts lodge within me this night. Quicken me by thy holy Spirit, that I may draw near unto thee with a true heart, and be fervent in Spirit in thy ſervice; and grant, that with a good and honeſt heart receiving thy Word, I may underſtand and keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience, and unto perfection. Remember thou thy ſervants, who are to diſpenſe thy Myſteries unto thy people: and eſpecially him, upon whoſe Miniſterie I am to wait. Pardon their ſins and frailties; open their mouths, guide their minds and tongues, that they may deliver thy truths.

truths as becometh the Oracles of the living God: And let thy work ſo proſper in their hands, that both themſelves and others may be built up in our moſt holy faith, to the perfecting thy Church, and the eternal glory of thy Name thereby, through our Lord and Saviour Chriſt Jeſus. *Amen.*

CHAP

Part. III. Chap. 8.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the true manner of ſanctifying the Lord's day.

SECT. I.

Generally before I go to Church.

NOW as to my Cloſet duties upon this day, leſt the ſolitary conſideration of them by themſelves, ſhould breed any neglect, forgetfulneſs, or diſturbance of the duties to be performed in the family, and in the *Publick Aſſembly*, it will be moſt expedient to conſider the whole duties of that day, both publick, private and ſecret, and ſet down each in their natural order.

Firſt then, as upon no day we ſuppoſe our Chriſtian to be ſlothful, ſo leaſt of all upon the Lord's day: but to be *up in a convenient ſeaſon*, both himſelf, and, if any are under his charge, to ſee that they are ſo too.

too. A convenient ſeaſon I call that, which every man's health and occaſions being conſidered, will agree therewith, and leave time ſufficient for the diſcharge of the duties of the day. And ſuppoſing the publick ſervice to begin generally about nine of the clock, between ſix and ſeven will be a good hour, and all things being well ordered, may conſiſt very well with moſt mens health and occaſions. And of this time, which paſſeth between my riſing and going to Church, if an hour be divided between the devotions of the Family and the Cloſet, ſo that half an hour be ſpent in the former, and the other half in my cloſet, it may do very well; and the common occaſions of moſt houſes being conſidered, ſo much time may be allowed by the chief (and perhaps moſt) of the family. If ſo much cannot be afforded to this work, yet let ſome: and what day ſoever I diſpenſe with double prayers (I mean prayer in my Cloſet, and prayer in my Family) yet this day let me omit neither.

It

Part. III. Chap. 8.

It is a bad *omen*, or unhappy token, to begin the ſanctification of the Lord's day by the breach of my ordinary courſe of devotion, and an argument it is likely to be but negligently ſanctified by me. Beſides, many in my family may perhaps make no other preparation for the worſhip of God, than what they make by joining in the family devotions: it will be therefore the more neceſſary to make ſure of thus much.

SECT. II.

Of ſecret devotion in the Cloſet before going to Church.

NOW my private devotions will be for the main the ſame this day as others. Only in my Meditations it is to be remembred, that I examine my ſelf touching my preparations for the ſolemn worſhip of God that day: and if any thing in my preparatory devotion be wanting (any ſin unconfeſſed, unrepented of, *&c.*) in theſe my

my morning devotions, let that be done. And how compleat ſoever I may conceive my preparations to have been, yet let me not in my prayers in privat that morning forget to ſend up ſome petitions for preparing and aſſiſting grace, to the end I may more ſpiritually go through the duties of the day: for the doing of which I cannot now want directions, after a preparatory prayer already conſidered upon. And theſe my Cloſet devotions will be neceſſary to be firſt performed, for that they will very well fit me to perform my devotions in my family with more fervency: and beſides, ſome of my family perhaps will not riſe, till my being up has given them the Alarm; who therefore will have time, to make ready to appear at the Devotions of the family whilſt I am diſcharging my ſecret Ones.

Part III. Chap. 8.

Chap. 7.

SECT.

Part III. Chap. 8.

SECT. III.

Of private devotion in the family before going to Church. A digreſſion touching what our devotion in the family is alwaies to conſiſt of.

THeſe therefore being done, and it being now ſomewhat above half an hour till the time we uſually go to Church, I am to call all my family (except in extraordinary caſes of ſickneſs, *&c.*) together to prayer; at which time all of them, who that day can go to Church, which ſhould be as many as may be, ſhould appear dreſſed as they are to go, that ſo after the family devotions performed, within a very ſhort ſpace we might all together reſort to the publick place of God's worſhip.

Now if queſtion be made, what the devotions of the family are to conſiſt of, the anſwere is; they cannot well conſiſt of leſs than theſe two

two parts, *Reading* and *Prayer*.

By *Reading* here I understand chiefly the reading the Word of God: and that it is the duty of the head of the family either himself to read (or cause by some other to be read) the holy Scriptures in the hearing of the family, none can question, who considers those frequent Commands to the ancient people of God, *to teach their children the Law of God and his judgments* and dealings with them. Deut 4, 6. &c.

Now, how they can be taught those things by their parents, from whom they never hear of them, cannot be understood: nor will any reasonable person think these commands fulfilled by the mere teaching their Children the *Belief*, *Lord's Prayer*, and *ten Commandments* (though this most surely ought to be done); for we find of old, they were to acquaint their Children of God's wonderful works in delivering them *out of the land of Egypt*: And in like manner, are we Christians to teach our Children Gods Miracles

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cles of grace, in freeing us by his Son out of the bondage of ſin; which, how it can be better done, than as God has thought fit to teach it to the world, to wit by the Holy Scriptures, none will eaſily find out.

Now for the method to be obſerved in reading the Scriptures in our family, that which was above commended for uſe in the Cloſet may haply be moſt proper. And if I ſo order it, that I read the ſame portion of Scripture in my family, and in my Cloſet, it may be much for my edification, the double reading it will ſet it deeper, both in my memory and in my underſtanding. But then, leſt I read faſter and more in my family than in my Cloſet, and for other reaſons, it will be neceſſary that either my Cloſet-devotions go before my family-devotions (as before in part directed) or that at leaſt I ſo contrive my readings, that what I laſt read in my Cloſet, I the next time read in my family.

Inſtead of Meditation which is one

one part of my Closet devotion, if in my familie I use to examine my people, what they have learnt and observed out of what hath been read, and where none takes notice of what is mainly observable, there suggest it to them; it may not be amiss, provided it be done soberly (without a long deal of prate and meddling with curious matters) and without vain-glory.

The Prayers, which I use in my familie, except upon some very eminent occasions may best be the Prayers of the Church. These are easie and best understandable: and the use of them in our families will fit the plainest people in our family to use them with more devotion and understanding in the publick. Notwithstanding I confess my judgment in this case to be, that the *Injunction* of them doth not in strictness reach to private families, but there is a liberty left; yet if we use that liberty only thus, so as freely and of our own accord to prefer the Prayers of the Church, I really judge (generally) it will be the best.

Some

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Some particular cases there may be, as when any great judgment lies upon the family, or the like, which may be admitted as exceptions to the general rule, and in which cases it may be expedient to use either other or more Prayers, than those extant in our Church Liturgy.

The general course then of my family devotions will be this, First, he who prays, begins with the last clause of that Exhortation thus: (*I pray and beseech you, as many as*, &c.) Then follows the confession: (*Almighty and most merciful*, &c.) The Absolution is to be left out, except he be a Minister who reads. Then comes the Lord's Prayer and Versicles. Which being done, all rising give attention to one reading a Psalm and a Chapter, or so much of them as the chief of the family shall appoint. This being ended, if the Master of the family, or any by him deputed, will at that time examine, or briefly (as before said) instruct any touching what hath been read, here such examination will most seasonably come in: After which

which, he who reads the Prayers saying (*Let us pray*) all kneel down, and he begins with the Verſicles, *The Lord be with you*, &c. and ſo proceeds with the Prayers in their order, as they ſtand, morning and evening. Added before the prayer of St. *Chryſoſtom* may be *the Prayer or Collect for all conditions of men*; or, *the General Thanksgiving*; or, in fit ſeaſons, the *Emberweek prayer*, the *prayer for the High Court of Parliament*; for *ſuitable Weather*, *&c.* with other Collects, at the diſcretion of the Maſter of the Family. Part III. Chap. 8.

Upon the Lord's-day in the morning, after the *Prayer for the Biſhops, Clergy, and the People*, that is, juſt before the Prayer of St. *Chryſoſtome*, it may be convenient to add, for preparing grace unto all, the prayer in the beginning of the Communion ſervice [*Almighty God to whom*, &c.] (or if there be any fitter in the Liturgy found) and that at the end of the Communion Service [*Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with*, &c.]

And in the *Evening* upon the

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Lords day, after the ſame prayer for the Biſhops, *&c.* to add that prayer for fruitfulneſs by the word of God, which is in the end of the Communion ſervice [*Grant we beſeech thee, Almighty God, that, &c.*] Immediately before that Benedictory prayer, *The grace of our Lord Jeſus*, &c. if all the Family *riſing* from their knees *ſtand up*, and *ſing* ſome ſhort *Pſalm of Praiſe* to God, it ſeems to me a moſt meet and Chriſtian cloſing of the day: Eſpecially where convenient *privacy* of the dwelling reconciles ſuch practice with *Decency*, and takes off the ſuſpition, or likelyhood, of oſtentation. It is true, the Ordinary Metres, into which *David*'s *Pſalmes* in this Kingdom have been turned, are (the beſt of them) very mean, and almoſt unfit for uſe, Publick or Private: But there are better Verſions extant; and however, even out of that old one, a diſcreet Chriſtian (ſuch as it is to be hoped, the Chief of Families are or ſtudy to be) will eaſily pick out, here and there, ſo many verſes, as may make a tolerable

lerable Hymn in the end of the daies Devotions. As ſuppoſe, *Pſ.* IV. *v.* 6. to the end, or *Pſ.* XCI. *v.* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. or *Pſ.* 95. the ſix firſt verſes, or *Pſ.* 103, the four firſt, with others. But ſtill, as before ſaid, let the Family be *diſmiſt* and all ſhut up with the uſual *Benediction.*

Thus much then as to the order of devotion in the family, both ordinarily and upon the Lord's day.

SECT. IV.

Of reſorting to the Church.

THeſe devotions both in my Family and Cloſet being thus performed, it will ſoon be time to appear before God in the Church. And I am to account no celebrating of the Lords day like to that in publick, with a full Congregation of Chriſtian people. Hither therefore I early, with as many of my family as poſſibly (at leaſt conveniently) I can, reſort, both my ſelf taking with me, if I can read, my Bible, and

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Common prayer-book; and seeing that the rest of my family, who can read, do the same; And (especially if the way be long) I watch very narrowly over my self, and those of mine with me, that *our discourse* be not vain and idle; much less purely worldly, so as to unfit our hearts: and as to my private self, the same care am I to have of *my thoughts*. Seasonable it will be, to think of the happiness which I enjoy, in that I come into the Courts of God, and feed upon the fat things of his House, and to praise God in my heart that I have such freedom of access unto him: in which case many happy and proper Ejaculations may I furnish my self with, out of holy *David*'s Psalms.

SECT. V.

Of due behaviour in the Church.

BEing come to the place, which is holy to God's worship, I enter it with all reverence, bare, if my Sex so require; remembring that though God

God be present every where, yet is he more specially in the places where his people are worshipping him: and any postures of reverence, that I use there, are acts of worship unto his unseen, but present, Majesty, and therefore cannot but be mistaken very much, if judged by any, superstitious. Having therefore orderly taken my place, I should (not out of custom but devotion) *bow to God my knees*, and beg his gracious presence and blessing towards me, and the congregation of his people, that shall there meet that day, which I may do in this or the like form.

O Lord, who though thou dwellest not in Temples made with hands, yet hast promised to meet and bless thy people wherever thou hast recorded thy Name; be pleased to be graciously present to thy Servant here worshipping be-

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fore thee, and to the Congregation of thy people, which ſhall here aſſemble themſelves this day for thy worſhip. Pardon every one, who hath not prepared himſelf according to the preparation of the Sanctuary. Quicken us all for thy Name's ſake; teach us to do thy will, and build us up in our moſt holy faith, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

I know there are ſome, who object againſt this practice, but I could never yet ſee any reaſon in their pretenſions.

This therefore being done, if the Congregation be not yet fully met, it is not for me to imploy my ſelf in vain diſcourſe with any of my neighbours: but either to meditate on ſomewhat which may be ſeaſonable, or, if I can, to read.

And it may not be improper, till I am well verſt in it, and know my duty

duty therein well, to read the *Church Liturgy*, *Rubrick* (that is, the directions, which are mingled with the prayers, for their use) *and all*; taking one day some part of it, and another day another, till I have gone through it wholly. By this means discreetly used, I shall be able more readily to joyn with the Minister and Congregation in the due use thereof: But if the Congregation be fully met, and Service beginning, or begun, I am to yield all possible attention, remembring God requires my whole man, all mine heart, soul and mind, yea and my very body too: Wherefore so I am to place and order even that (I mean my very body) as the worship of God, and the Churches instructions for the worship of that God, require; *kneeling*, *standing*, and *answering* still, whereſoever I ought. Nor am I to censure any thing, if I do not yet understand its use: for by so much as I do understand, I cannot but in a good measure see the wisdom and pious intentions of the Church: By those an-

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swers, which I with the rest of the People are to make, I find my self much quickned, and my wandring heart many times called home; the use therefore of these as I should not omit, so should the benefit, which I have found by them, be an argument to me to conform my self to every other practice enjoyned, not doubting, but that all of them will in the end have as good an effect, as this upon me.

During the celebration of God's worship, if my mind at any time be run away from my work, I am as soon as ever I perceive it, secretly to check my self, to call it home, and in my heart saying *Lord pardon and help thy servant*, or using some such ejaculation, to imploy my whole Soul as fully as I can about my business, remembring not only how displeasing it is to God, but how unprofitable to my self, to draw near unto him with my body only, and *honour him with my lips, when my soul is far off.*

Whatsoever I hear of the Word read or preached, I must remember all

all along to apply unto my ſelf, not carping at, or cenſuring the Preacher, but taking all in the beſt ſenſe, (*Poſſibly it may be long of my ſins he did no better, or ſo ill*) nor looking ſo much how it concerns others, as my own particular ſtate and manners. And if there be any thing which more nearly toucheth and concerneth me, that let me be ſure by ſome means or other to keep or ſet home upon my memory, perhaps there may be ſome place of Scripture cited to confirm, explain, or illuſtrate it; let me note that place, and the being able to find it may in caſe I am forgetful, bring the matter to my remembrance.

The exerciſes of divine worſhip being all ended, I am with the ſame reverence to depart the Church, with which I entred it (not rudely, haſtily and diſorderly, as the common manner of the multitude is) courteouſly ſaluting any of my neighbours, which I have occaſion to ſalute, and that with inward love and good will: remembring that the ancient Chriſtians had ſuch an

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uſage at their Aſſemblies, as *the Kiſs of Charity*; it is but Chriſtian therefore for me, going out of the Aſſembly now diſmiſt, to uſe a charitable and chearful Salutation to any of my Chriſtian neighbours.

SECT. VI.

Of due behaviour between the Morning and Evening Service.

MY return with my family home ſhould be with the ſame gravity and care, with which was my paſſage to the Church: my talk, rather of what I heard or learnt, than of any worldly matter, except neceſſary occaſions enforce the contrary. And being come home, one of my firſt buſineſſes ſhould be to *ſtep aſide into my Cloſet*, if poſſibly I can, and there, according as I have found my ſelf affected, to *apply my ſelf unto God*. If I have been awakened to any duty, raiſed to any hopes of God's favour, ſtrengthen'd in any of my holy reſolutions, informed of any thing touching which

I was ignorant, or the like, there briefly to bleſs God for it: if I have been dull and unprofitable, there to bewail it; both which may be done after this or ſome ſuch ſort. Part. III. Chap. 8.

I Bleſs thee, O Lord my God, for the comforts of thy Houſe; for thy awakenings of me to my duty; for any ſoftenings of my heart, and ſenſe of thy love, or hopes of enjoying thee hereafter. Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, who am a vain, hard-hearted, ſinful wretch of my ſelf, but to thy holy Name be the praiſe. Now encreaſe, I beſeech thee, this thy goodneſs to me; and confirm me in thy Grace evermore; Let me grow in the knowledg, fear, and love of thee; and any impreſſions thereof, which I have this day received, ſuffer me not to

loſe;;

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loſe; but enable me to bring forth fruit unto perfection, to the glory of thy Name, through Jeſus Chriſt, my bleſſed Lord and Mediatour. *Amen.*

If this Prayer may not ſuit with my condition, it may be preſumed, that as I have knowledge enough to ſee it doth not, ſo I have abilities enough in ſome tolerable way to repreſent and bewail before God my barrenneſs, heedleſneſs, worldlineſs, carnality, and whatever other great diſtempers I find in my ſoul, which accordingly I ought briefly to do. And this being done, let me *recollect my ſelf*, and view over in my mind thoſe ſeverals, which I have that day learned or been affected with; for this will further imprint them upon the memory. Leſs than a quarter of an hour may ſuffice hereto: and thongh haply ſometimes I may ſee occaſion to allow more,

more, yet ſo much ſure I may afford at all times.

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Having thus faſtned upon my ſpirit my ſpiritual gains, I now depart to my company for the neceſſary refreſhment of my Body, which this day was not appointed to abridge me of. Let me therefore be chearful, and *eating my meat in ſingleneſs of heart*, rejoice before my God: but let not my joy by any means be wanton, idle, vain, or intemperate.

Of the reſt of the time which paſſeth between the publick duties of the day, the imployment ought to be ſacred, at leaſt wholſome, and ſuch which may not indiſpoſe me for the remaining part of the dayes work: and hereof much care is to be had.

Firſt, as to my *diſcourſe*: touching which if it be the Apoſtle's precept, at all times to be obſerved, that *our ſpeech be alwayes with grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt*, certainly, in more ſpecial ſort ought it to be ſuch on this day. And though it cannot be accounted abſolutely ſinful to converſe

Col. 4. 6.

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verſe about matters of ſecular concernment, if occaſion ſo require; yet 1. To be wholly taken up with theſe, cannot but argue a greater care of this world, than ſenſe of Chriſtianity; if ſo be there be any truth in that Speech of him who is infallible: *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh.* And, 2. To be needleſly medling with ſuch affairs, or idlely buſying our ſelves about other mens actions and concerns (which are the ordinary ſubject of mens diſcourſes after dinner on the Lord's day) is at the beſt but a mixture of wordlineſs and vanity: and we ought to remember, it is made the character of naughty men, that *their tongues walk through the earth.*

Secondly, as to my *Actions*, care too is to be taken: It is not queſtionleſs unlawful upon due occaſion, that is, on account of mine own or others neceſſity, or conſiderable conveniency, to put mine hands to an ordinary action, as is evident from our Saviour's both *Doctrine* and *Practice*: But as above ſaid of

of *diſcourſe*, ſo now of *buſineſs*, to be needleſly imploy'd in worldly matters, and ordinary works, cannot but be ſome kind of profanation of the day, as being contrary to its ſanctification; that is, being a ſpending it to other uſes and ends, than thoſe for which it was ſet apart. And albeit in this caſe no certain perpetual rule is to be ſet, (the conditions of men being various) but each mans Chriſtian diſcretion and piety ought to mete out to himſelf what he in his own conſcience, and in the fear of God, conſidering his occaſions, judgeth fit (in which we are not one to judge another) notwithſtanding I cannot think, that man takes ſuch care of himſelf as he ought, or is duly cautious of indiſpoſing his heart for his duty, who can conſtantly ſuffer all this time between morning and evening ſervice to paſs over with him without any thing of devotion, either in his privacy or family, or juſt as the ſame time paſſeth over every day. This I ſay, cannot be to ſanctifie the day, becauſe not to ſeparate it from common,

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mon, and to uſe it to diſtinct ends.

Soon therefore after dinner ended among all the family, it is meet that I *call the younger ſort*, and ſet them to the learning their *Catechiſm*; and as to the *Elder*, if I ſuſpect any of them to be apt to trifle away their time, let them be kept in my preſence: and if all of them be able, let them *read* by courſe ſomewhat out of the *Scripture*, or ſome plain and *honeſt book*; if all be not, then ſuch as can.

SECT. VII.

Of reſorting to Evening ſervice.

WHen it is now almoſt time to reſort to *Evening ſervice*, let all be called together, to the end that all may orderly repair with me to the *publick Aſſembly*. And it may not be amiſs (but right edifying) if ſome one perſon read a Pſalm ſutable to the preſent undertaking of going to worſhip God (ſuch as is the lxxxiv. or the cxix. one or two parts of it being taken at a time as occaſion or time ſhall ſerve) to which

which reading all ought reverently to attend. And this being done, let the same rules and directions which were given touching going to Church in the morning, be observed in the evening, and all as before resort to the publick worship. Which if they do, I and my family are now a second time attentively and reverently placed before God in his house of Prayer; where my carriage ought to be the same, as is before directed to. And surely unless I and my house apear thus the second time before God I cannot account my self duly to sanctifie the Lord's day, I have done it only by halves. The *Church* was never in a *setled condition*, but it had the Evening as well as the Morning Sacrifice; *Vespers* as well as *Matins*.

If therefore any thing should so fall out, that I or mine are hindred from the second part of the publick duties of the day, it ought to be my grief and sorrow, *Psal.* 42. 4.

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

Of the duties after return from Evening ſervice.

MY *departure from the Church* and my *retirement* as ſoon as I come home for about a quarter of an hour, or as I ſee occaſion, ſhould be after the ſame ſort, as in the former part of the day. Which being done, it will be expedient to come amongſt my people, and ſee that all things are wiſely ordered, that ſo ſome time *before night* the *devotions of the family* may be performed. In the mean time both I my ſelf and as many of the family as can be ſpared from neceſſary ſervices, are free to our *private devotions*. Only if there are any triflers, let them and the younger ſort be dealt with, as before dinner, that is, kept where the people moſt commonly ſit, reading and attending to the Word of God, at leaſt for ſome certain ſpace. Let them not ſpend their time as they do ordinarily: for the *Lord's day ſhould look with another face than common days, all the day long.*

This

This care being taken of my ſelf and family, I ſee not but my *Chriſtian liberty* permits me any honeſt refreſhment, ſuch as may be *walking forth in my Garden*, in the *fields or open air*. Only let me obſerve theſe cautions: 1. That my walk be ſome ſuch as *Iſaac*'s Evening walk was, that my *Meditations be good*. Unqueſtionably I ſhall not find the fields an unfit place for good thoughts: There are many in the world, whom the very breathing the freſh air, the beholding the glorious light of heaven, the paſſing clouds, the verdant earth, and ſmiling face of all things, tranſport into a rapture of devotion, affect very much with the admiration of the Creator of all things, make too to long for the time, when either they ſhall aſcend above the clouds or viſible heavens, or ſee them paſs away, and dwell ever with their God, beholding his face without any ſuch interpoſitions. And with much advantage may a man ſpend an hour thus, mixing often *prayers* or *ejaculations* with theſe his thoughts.

2. Another

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2. Another caution I ſhould obſerve is, That I *return* ſo *early*, as that neither my *Devotions* in my *Cloſet* nor in my *family* may be omitted. And truly moſt convenient will it be, that my own private devotions (which, being that I look on my ſelf bound to on other days, I cannot this day omit) be performed before the ſupper which I take: for then ſhall I be freſheſt, then will what I have learnt that day be better in my memory, than after the diverſions which my ſupper and company may cauſe. Beſides that, the performance of them will have fixed and prepared my ſpirit againſt any ſuch diverſions, and for the performance of devotion in the family. Which practice too on other evenings may not be improper, but poſſibly, by reaſon of my conſtitution, convenient, if not neceſſary.

Now as to what I am this evening to perform in my Cloſet, it is the ſame, for the moſt part, as at other times. My courſe of *reading* muſt be the ſame: only, if ſo be that I ſee fit, the portion which I read larger. My *meditations* (beſides what is

is every days task) upon what I read, may take in a view of my carriage that day; an enquiry what I have learnt; a considering so as to affect my self with it, and a setting down a resolution to endeavour in all my waies a practice of it. My *prayers* may take in some new Confessions [of my *unprofitableness, hard-heartedness, unsetledness,*] Petitions (for *pardon, memory to retain, and grace to perform* what I have learned;) Thanksgivings (for any *quickenings of heart, resolution of holiness, any instruction, or improvement* of my Christian knowledge, *&c.*) all suitable to what in my Meditations I have found my estate to be: for the inserting or putting in of which, I shall easily find in my usual prayers fit places.

My Closet-devotions being thus performed, time it will now be for me and my family to take what *Evening meal* we use: which being done in some convenient time before we go to bed, (which ought not for many reasons to be too late) If I am a pious Christian, I cannot but

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but look upon my ſelf bound to ſhut up the day in my family with ſome ſuch devotions as I begun it with. Touching which, ſome directions have been already given, as to Reading and Prayer: and it is only to be added, that I am to make *ſome inquiry* ſeverally into thoſe who are under my charge touching their improvements that day; to help out and *inſtruct* the ignorant, to *rebuke*, and that ſharply, the negligent and heedleſs; to *encourage* the careful, as my Chriſtian diſcretion ſhall ſee meet: the propereſt place for which, will be either before the prayers begin, or juſt after the reading of the Scriptures, ſo that the family may be diſmiſſed, and the day ended with prayers.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

A Digreſſion by way of Anſwer to ſome Objections againſt the Practice directed: And two Forms of Prayer, the one for Morning, the other for Evening, which may be uſed in the Family, upon the Lords day, or on any other great Feſtival, with little Alteration.

AGainſt part of the Practice, in obſerving the Lords day, above ſet down, I may meet haply with different ſorts of men, who have entertained ſuch prejudices, and will move ſuch objections, as may, not a little ſtartle and diſturb me therein, except I be well reſolved, and have maturely conſidered before hand.

Firſt. As to taking account of, examining, inſtructing, and, as occaſion ſerves, admoniſhing, reproving, encouraging the under-

part

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part of the Family, by the Master thereof, or whom he shall appoint; this somepeople will call Puritanism, Sabbatarianism, Fanaticism, or give some such odious style unto. But I am to consider, that the World is very often abused by evil mens putting false names on things: And it would be very unreasonable in me, to forego my *Duty*, or cast off the *means of* my own, and Families *Salvation*, because a race of licentious and bold immoralists miscal both. I may observe the Excellent Author of the Whole Duty of Man, whom none in their wits judge a favourer of Puritanical or Enthusiastical practices, very expres in these particulars. *Partition* 2. *Sect.* 17, 18. 22, 23. 26. *&c.* And I know many persons of undoubted Learning, Solidity and Zeal for our Establisht Church, who both agree with him, and particularly, practise these things themselves. Wherefore I am not to be moved by the bold Suggestions, no nor scoffs of *Libertines*, who pretend to be of the Church

Church of *England*, but are in truth of no Church nor any Religion.

The ſame imputation, from like perſons, I may hear brought againſt private Pſalmody, or ſinging praiſe to God, in the Family: But if I look into the writings of the Ancient *Fathers*, whether of the *Greek* or *Latin* Church, I ſhall find that not only the *Parlours*, but *Chambers* and *Beds* of *Ancient Chriſtians*, nay their very *Work-houſes* and *Fields*, ſounded with Hymns to God and Chriſt. Such ſinging was not only their daily practice, but almoſt a Badge of Chriſtianity. This then is no Puritanical Novelty.

Others perhaps of a quite contrary humour or temper I may ſomtimes meet with, who are for Reading, and Catechiſing, and Prayer, and Singing too in the Family, but (eſpecially on the Lords day, and like times) would have other prayers there, than what have been above pitched on. They conſider haply, that the Morning and Evening Service, as ſtanding in our

Liturgy, are to be the main employment of their Own, and Families Devotion in the publick Aſſembly on thoſe days; and they think, and tell us they find, the double uſe of it flattens their Spirits, dulls their Thoughts, and Affections, ſuch uſe being but a ſudden doing the ſame thing over again. Now it is to be confeſt, the Church does no where injoyn us the double uſe of the Morning or of Evening prayers: And though on Ordinary days, when the Family hears not Divine Service in publick, no prayers can be generally, with more deference to the Church, and more benefit to the whole body of the people, uſed in the Family, than the Church-prayers, though alſo a grown and ſolid Chriſtian, may to the ſame words, uſed again and again, ſtill bring new Devotion, and freſh Affections, yet for the ſake of thoſe, who perhaps truly complain they cannot, and becauſe it is not amiſs to *help Devotion*, by all lawful and *diſcreet Methods*, of which *ſome variety*, at certain ſeaſons

sons, may be one, here is subjoyned a *Form* of a *Morning* and *Evening prayer*, which may be used in the *Family*, on the *Lords day*, or on any other *great Festival*, or *Solemn Day*, with very *little Alteration*.

A Morning Prayer, on the Lords day in the Family.

MOST Glorious God, the alone Holy one, and Almighty Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth; who wilt be glorified by, or upon all the Inhabitants of the World. Thou hast commanded, that we seek thy face; and thy Face, Lord, do we seek: We most humbly, with Soul and Body, worship before thy Majesty; desiring hereby withall to prepare, and fit our selves more solemnly, to worship thee in thine house of prayer. *Invocation and Adoration.*

Part. III. Chap. 9. Confession.

But who are we, O Lord, that we ſhould think to tread thy Courts, or approach the place, where thine Honour dwelleth! A ſinful people, laden with iniquity, a ſeed of Evil doers, Children corrupted, and corrupters; who have forſaken thee, the God of our Mercies, and walked after the Imaginations of our own hearts, and according to the courſe of this World, hearkening unto the Spirit, that worketh in the Children of diſobedience. What Duties have we not neglected? And what ſins almoſt are there, which we have not committed, in thought, word, or deed? We have long gone on, wearying our ſelves, and even thee, our God, with our repeated evils. Thou, out of thy tender compaſſion, haſt called to us, and we have refuſed: Thou haſt

haſt ſtretched out thine hand, and we have not regarded. We have ſet at nought thy Counſel, and would have none of thy Reproof. Theſe things have we done, and thou haſt ſtill ſpared us, expecting if we would return, and waiting to be gracious: Yet have we not turned unto thee, the Lord our God, with all our hearts, and with all our Souls. Ah! which of us to this day can ſay, We regard no iniquity in our hearts? If ſometimes we ſeem to cleave unto thee, and follow after thee, of how ſhort a continuance is ſuch our amendment? Our Righteouſneſs is even as the Morning dew; it paſſeth away, and is not. But our ſins are ever about us, and ſtill prevent us. We have throughout our whole lives ſo accuſtomed our ſelves to the

Part III. Chap 9.

doing evil, to the love of pleasures, and of this World, that even when we would do good, how to do it, we find not. Thy commandments seem grievous, and thy Worship tedious, to our corrupt and carnal minds; And even when we do draw neer unto thee with our Lips, and Honour thee with our Mouths, how often are our Hearts far from thee!

Petition. Yet in this deplorable state of guilt and depravation, whither can we fly, but to thee, our so long provoked God? On thee therefore, O Lord, do we cast our selves: To thee do we confess our sinfulness, and lay open our grievances, most humbly beseeching succour from thy Grace. Oh! turn away thine Eyes from beholding our polluted State, and let thy Fatherly Mercies in

in Christ Jesus, be moved towards us, whom no power but thine can help. In the bowels of compassion to us, be pleased to send down into our hearts the Spirit of thy Son, for the healing all evil imaginations, and inclinations in us, and rectifying our whole temper. By that good Spirit inlighten our minds in the knowledge of our duty, that we may clearly see what we are to do, and what we are to avoid, for the walking in all well pleasing before thee. Convince our hearts and Consciences of the necessity of having respect to all thy Commandments, and imprint daily more deeply upon them, the several obligations that lye upon us thereto. By this means perswade and bow our wills in all things, to follow a good Conscience. Strengthen all our

Part III. Chap. 9.

powers to perfect holiness in thy fear: And so sanctify us throughout, in Body, Soul, and Spirit, that we may be faithfully, and intirely thine unto Death; For which We beseech thee, daily more and more to prepare every one of us, by quickning of us to examin our Consciences, to prove our selves, to renew our Repentance, to watch against all the wiles of Sin, and resist all temptations, whether from the World, Flesh, or Devil. Over all these, O Lord, by thy power make us more than Conquerors. And as to all the sins which we have committed, whether known, or unknown, whether new or old, vouchsafe unto us a full and free pardon, through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom alone we have hope, and through whom we beseech thee

thee in thy good time, to grant us a bleſſed Reſurrection, and an Inheritance amongſt thy Saints, in Light and Glory Everlaſting. Mean while, O Bleſſed Father, according to thine abundant Grace, grant unto us, that all things may work together to us for good: And ſeeing that by thy moſt wiſe diſpoſition, we know not the things, which ſhall befall us in this life, nor is it fit we ſhould be our own chooſers, whatſoever thou haſt reſerved for us, or ſhalt bring us unto, let us not only be therewith content, but from our hearts endeavour, in all conditions and circumſtances both in life and death, to glorifie thee, and ſhew forth thy praiſes, who haſt called us out of Darkneſs, into thy marvellous Light, and into the Kingdom of thy dear Son.

Part. III. Chap. 9.

Intercession.

In whoſe name we continue our ſupplications unto thee, for the whole race of Mankind; that thou, who wouldſt have all men to be ſaved, and to come to the knowledge of thy Truth, wouldſt enlarge the bounds of thy Church, and in thine own good time, ſend the light of thy Goſpel to thoſe, who ſit in darkneſs, and the ſhadow of Death. Let *Iſrael* according to the fleſh, look upon him, *whom they have pierced*, and return unto the Lord their God, and with them let the Fulneſs of the *Gentiles* believe and glorify thee, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt, whom thou haſt ſent. Defend, Purge, and Unite the Univerſal Church, and more particularly, theſe Churches of *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*. Preſerve, and with all the good things

things of Heaven, and Earth, bleſs the nourſing Father thereof, our Soveraign Lord the King, together with his Queen, the Duke, and the whole Royal Family. Guide and govern his Counſellours, and all who govern under him, in the faithful diſcharge of their Duty, to the puniſhment of Evil-Doers, and praiſe of them that do well. Let thine Holy Spirit ever aſſiſt, and actuate the Miniſters of thy Goſpel, whether Biſhops, Prieſts, or Deacons, in their whole Lives and Miniſtry, and eſpecially ſuch of them, to whoſe charge, thy providence hath committed us, that thy work may proſper in their hands, and the People be brought unto, and built up in, the moſt holy Faith of our Lord Chriſt. Vouchſafe unto all our Friends ſuch mercies, as thou

Part. III. Chap. 9.

thou knoweſt them moſt to need; and, according to the ſame riches of thy knowledge and goodneſs, recompence all our Benefactors, and forgive all our Enemies. Be pleaſed to meet, and bleſs all thoſe Congregations which ſhall this day be aſſembled in thy fear.

Carry us to thy houſe of Prayer and make us glad therein with the light of thy Countenance. To this purpoſe, remove before hand from us all vain and worldly thoughts; compoſe our minds,; open and enlarge our hearts, that we may attend unto thoſe things, which ſhall be ſpoken, and ſo receive thy word, as to grow thereby. Let not any of the ſins of the week paſt, or of our whole lives, interpoſe to hinder good things, the operations, and aſſiſtances of thy Grace towards us: But

grant

grant unto us, that in and through every part of thy worſhip, we may worſhip thee, who art a Spirit, in Spirit and in Truth. Keep us this day out of all Evil, eſpecially out of all ſin: Guide us in all good, and in the end even unto thy ſelf in Glory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who has commanded us, when we pray, to ſay,

Our Father, &c

An Evening Prayer for the ſame Day and Company.

Invocation, and Adoration.

O Moſt Bleſſed God, the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, through whom thou extendeſt mercy and bleſſings to all the Families of the Earth; but art more abundantly Gracious in particular to the Families

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milies that call upon thy name, and worſhip thee in the way of thy commandments. We humbly bring our Evening ſacrifice of Worſhip and Homage to thy Majeſty, again caſting our ſelves at thy foot-ſtool, beſeeching thy bleſſing upon us, and deſiring to cloſe this day with the thoughts of thee, for they are ſweet.

Confeſſion. We muſt, O Lord, acknowledge, the Worſhip, we have this day paid thee, comes much ſhort of what we ought; little time have we ſpent with thee, or upon thy Service, in compariſon of what we might and owe. We have been taken up too much in doing our own works, and finding our own pleaſures, and ſpeaking our own Words: Even in our Acts of Worſhip towards thee, how miſerably have our hearts ſtray-

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ed from thee! How heedleſs, dull, and indifferent have we been! A very luke-warm generation, and deſerving to be ſpued out of thy mouth! All theſe miſerable diſtempers of our Hearts we muſt confeſs to be mainly due unto our ſelves, to the Careleſsneſs, Exceſſes, and abominable Practices, wherein we lived, and too often allowed our ſelves. Ah, Lord! With what grief of Heart, and confuſion of Face, ought we to look back upon our paſt Converſation! And yet, alas! how unconcerned, how unaffected are our hard hearts; and that after ſo long a time, as thou haſt vouchſafed us for repentance! Out of thine infinite Goodneſs and Mercy, thou indeed haſt called us early to the knowledge of thy Grace and Faith in thee, yea, to the glo-

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rious liberty of the Children of God. But we, one while have not been ſenſible hereof, and ſince we have known thee, and this our high calling, we have not liked to retain God in our knowledge; we have oftentimes held thy truth in unrighteouſneſs; we have yielded our ſelves Servants of diſobedience unto ſin, and, by innumerable miſdeeds, ſlaves to divers Luſts and Pleaſures. If any of us are at preſent in ſome meaſure made free, and the chains of ſin, wherewith we were bound, any whit broken off, we owe it to the power of thy Grace, to the unwearied ſtrivings of thy Spirit, and to the ſweet methods of thy Providence, for the delivering us out of thoſe ſnares of the Devil, which we had run our ſelves into, contrary to the light and guidance:

dance we have had from thee.

Part III. Chap. 9. Petition.

Bleſſed be thy name, O Lord, that we have thus far eſcaped the pollutions of the world through luſt. Now give us leave to beſeech thee, that thou wilt perfect thy work in us, that thou wilt not ceaſe, till thou haſt brought forth Judgment unto Victory, till thou haſt captivated all our hearts, and every thought and imagination of them, to the obedience of thy Son Chriſt Jeſus, and to a full conformity to thy will in all things. Let that Grace, which brings Salvation, enable us, as we are taught, to renounce all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live Godlily, Righteouſly, and Soberly in this preſent World, as looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearance of our great God and Saviour Chriſt Jeſus

Part. III. Chap. 9.

Jesus. Repleniſh our hearts with Faith, and with the Fear Love, and Honour, of thee, our God; with Juſtice and Charity towards Mankind; with Purity, Temperance, Meekneſs and Humility; with a fervent Zeal for thy Glory, and care of our own immortal Souls. And grant that we may not only perſevere in theſe and all other the Graces of thy holy Spirit, but daily grow therein, and bring forth Fruit unto perfection, more and more, until we come to thine everlaſting Kingdom. To this happy end, bleſs, good Lord, that portion of the Bread of Life, with which thou haſt this day fed us. Grant, we may remember what we have learnt, and improve all the holy affections, and good purpoſes, thou haſt raiſed in us, and watching

watching againſt, and reſiſting all temptations, to the contrary, preſs hard on towards the mark of the price of our high calling in Chriſt Jeſus: In whoſe name, we beſeech thee to be further Merciful to us, in the pardon of all our ſins; all, which we have confeſſed; all, which we ought to have confeſſed, and even thoſe which we cannot confeſs, becauſe ſecret and unknown to our own hearts, but open and naked unto thee, who art greater than our hearts, and knoweſt all things. O Lord, let all of them be blotted out, and let us be found clothed with the Righteouſneſs which is through the Faith of Chriſt, when thoſe days of refreſhing ſhall come, from before thy preſence. Which time we beſeech thee, we may ever live ſo mindful of, and prepared for,

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for, that when our Lord ſhall appear, we may be ſet on his right hand, and as bleſſed ones behold thy Face in fulneſs of joyes for evermore. Mean while, O Lord, be pleaſed to diſpoſe of us and all our concerns, as may moſt agree with the great ends of thy Glory, and our own Eternal welfare. Enable and quicken us, whatever befalls us, to maintain content, eaſy, and quiet minds, always in due temper for the Service of our God.

Intercession. And, O thou Father of all Mercies, who by thy Apoſtle, haſt commanded us to make our prayers, and ſupplications for all men, be intreated to extend thy Mercy unto all, according to the good pleaſure of thine own will: But eſpecially, viſit, with thy more abundant loving kindneſs, all, who

who in every place call upon the name of Jesus, their Lord and ours. Purify, Good Lord, unite, preserve, and enlarge thy Church daily. Continue thy mercies, particularly to these Churches, which thou hast united in one orderly Reformation, in great *Britain* and *Ireland*. Divert the judgments we have most justly deserved, pardon as well our great unfruitfulness, as all our other crying sins; and however thou art pleased to exercise us, be pleased to find other means to amend us, than civil breaches, and the calamities thence ensuing. Let thy Church fall into the hands of thee her God, but not into the hands of man. Watch over our Gracious King for good, and preserve him from violence and treachery, from diseases, and every evil accident, till,

Part III. Chap. 9.

till, in a good Old age, thou ſhalt remove him from a fading to an incorruptible Crown with thy ſelf in Glory. Let thy Bleſſing alſo plentifully in all kinds reſt upon his Queen, the Duke, and the whole Royal Family. And upon all other ſorts and conditions of men amongſt us, more eſpecially upon thy Miniſters, who ſerve thee, and our Souls, in thy Church; and upon all who are employed in the Execution of Government, and Juſtice in the State, pour out abundantly a Spirit of wiſdome and underſtanding, a Spirit of judgment and of thy Fear, that they may uprightly and effectually diſcharge their Duty, to thy Glory, the intereſt of true Religion, and the publick peace and proſperity. Carry on, O Lord, throughout the Chriſtian

an World, the Reformation of thy Church; further favour, and cheriſh it every where abroad, where it is begun. Graciouſly ſuccour and ſupport all, who ſuffer for a good Conſcience any where upon the Face of the Earth, together with all others, who are in any diſtreſs inward or outward; as alſo all, who either deſire or need, or have deſerved our prayers. According to thine all-ſufficient goodneſs, be thou all in all to every member of thy Sons Body.

Thanksgiving.

Finally, we offer up unto thee, O God, our humble praiſes and adorations, for all thy Mercies vouchſafed to us and to the whole Humane nature: For our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Saviour of the World, bleſſed for ever; for his moſt precious blood, ſhed on the Croſs for

for the remiſſion of our ſins, for his holy Spirit in any meaſure ſhed abroad in our hearts: For the freedom of thy Houſe, for all the means of Grace, and advantages to an holy life, which we enjoy publickly, and privately; for the bleſſed portions of the ſpiritual good things of this day. We bleſs thee alſo for thy more common Mercies, of food, raiment, ſleep, health and ſafety; for the publick peace, plenty, and proſperity. Oh! Let all thy loving kindneſs engage our hearts more firmly to thee. Send us this night to our reſt, in thy peace and favour; Pardon the ſins of our holy things. Accept the works of the day, and ſprinkle all, both our Perſons and Performances, with the Blood of our Lord Jeſus, in whoſe name and words we further pray, *Our Father.* &c.

I Confeſs both this, and the foregoing Chapter, may in ſtrictneſs ſeem a digreſſion, from the buſineſs firſt propounded: But the Reader will conſider, that theſe things are immediately for the ſervice of *private*, though not ſo ſtrictly of *ſecret*, *Devotion*; that therefore I have not far ſtept aſide, and I now return more cloſely to proceed with Cloſet-work, which certainly every one will be ſo much the devouter in, by how much more regular, *ſerious, and Conſcientious* they are in ſuch Duties of the Family, as I have here touched: And ſo likewiſe on the other part, the Devouter in the Cloſet the Devouter in the Family, and indeed every where.

PART IV.

Of most solemn Retirement into the Closet for Humiliation.

CHAP. I.

An account of what it is to be treated of particularly in this Part.

MY most solemn retirement into my Closet, and that for which the place is most principally designed, is upon such daies or times, which I set apart to humble my

my ſelf for my ſins before God, by *Faſting*, and *Prayer*, by *Mourning*, and all *acts of Contrition*.

And truly if the *ordinary Faſting days* of the *Church* were duly by all obſerved, all that our preſent deſign would ſeem to call for, were, to deliver the manner of their private obſervation, that is, the particular duties to be on them performed. But for as much as moſt men keep them ordinarily no otherwiſe, than by a little change of diet, taking perhaps fiſh, *&c.* for fleſh, and feeding, neither more ſparingly, nor much leſs deliciouſly, than they do on other days, and ſo make them indeed no Faſting days, we muſt conſider both of the *Setting apart* of *days* for *private faſting*, and of their *Obſervation*, when ſet apart. But firſt of all, it will be neceſſary to ſpend a few thoughts upon the nature and ends of *Faſting*.

Part IV. Chap. 2.

CHAP. II.

Of the Nature and Ends of Faſting.

BY Faſting here is meant a *Religious abſtaining from our lawful food.* Lawful food at preſent we will account that, which, according to the common practice of ſober and diſcreet perſons of our rank and quality, is neither too *much* nor too *dainty* for us. For we may account a man intemperate in his feeding, as well by being too delicate and fine, and eating conſtantly of things which are fit chiefly for perſons above his degree, as by eating overmuch. Now not all abſtaining from this my lawful food is that *Faſting*, which is here intended: for I may abſtain for my healths ſake, or through buſineſs, or (by ſome accidents) upon neceſſity, and all (it may very well be) without ſin, and yet not faſt, as Faſting ſigni-

ſignifies a duty, or an act acceptable to God: but it muſt be a Religious abſtaining, which I can duly call Faſting, as at preſent that name is uſed. Now it will be beſt diſcerned to be *Religious*, (1.) by the *ends* which I deſign to my ſelf therein, and (2.) by my *imployment* of my ſelf upon ſuch my Faſting days.

See D. *Hammond.* Pract. Catech. Lib. 3. Sect. 3.

Firſt, As to the ends and deſigns of him who abſtains or faſts Religiouſly; the chief of them are.

1. Devotion, or the performance of Religious exerciſes: when I faſt, that I may have more leiſure and be freſher for *Reading*, *Meditation*, and *Prayer*.

2. Mortification: when I faſt to tame my fleſh, to *keep under* and *beat down* my body, that it may be in due obedience to the commands of God and reaſon.

3. Liberality: when I faſt to deal my bread unto the hungry, and either deprive my ſelf, or feed more ſlenderly, that I may have the more wherewith to relieve others.

4. Sympathiſing with the ſufferings of others: when I faſt out of

a fellow feeling of the afflictions of God's people, commiſerating their condition, and, through an abundance of charity, deſiring as it were, to partake with them in their ſufferings.

5. Exerciſing my ſelf to the obedience of Chriſts commands: when I faſt out of ſelf-denial, (and though I both would and could eat) by faſting, as by one particular act of obedience to that general command of denying my ſelf, *exerciſing my ſelf unto godlineſs.*

6. Diverting or removing God's wrath, and expreſſing my ſorrow and humiliation for ſin: when, God's wrath either reſting upon my country, or friends, or ſelf, or hanging over any of our heads, I faſt and deprecate it, and beg pardon of all thoſe evils, which have brought us into ſuch miſery or danger.

7. An holy revenge or puniſhment of my ſelf: when having repented of ſome ſin, for which I am holily angry with my ſelf, I chooſe thus to puniſh and chaſtiſe my ſelf for my former (it may be) luxury, wantonneſs, or the like. When,

When, I ſay, out of any of theſe intentions, or with theſe deſigns I abſtain from my lawful meat, I then faſt in the ſenſe that Faſting is now taken: for this is (thus far) Religiouſly to abſtain, and no doubt, but ſuch abſtaining is acceptable unto God, if all be as right as my intentions, that is, if ſuitable *performances or devotions* be added, which is the ſecond point, conſtituting a Religious Faſt, and touching which, rules will anon be conſidered, when the nature of Faſting is a little further looked into, and it ſhall be made evident that it is a duty, and no ſuch needleſs matter, as men uſually ſeem to take it for, if we may judge of what they think, by what they do.

CHAP. III.

That Faſting is a Chriſtian Duty.

NOW that none either ſuſpicion touching its neceſſity, or

Part IV. Chap. 3.

excuſe for its neglect may be left, it will be expedient to conſider, what Evidence may be brought, that Faſting is a Chriſtian duty. And

1. Indeed there needeth little more to be urged for the proving it a duty, beſides the recollection and ſumming up thoſe excellent ends, to which it ſerveth and conduceth. No doubt but to *humble* my ſelf for my ſins, to *pray earneſtly* for *pardon*, and for *the turning away* of God's *wrath* are duties, no doubt but to *keep under* my body and make it ſubject, to *relieve the poor*, to *ſympathiſe* with the *afflictions of Joſeph*, are duties: now to all theſe is Faſting a means, and of ſome of them (beſides) an expreſſion. No doubt but to *deny my ſelf*, and to take upon my ſelf *an holy revenge* for my former extravagancies, are duties: Now of theſe is Faſting a part. It may therefore hence ſufficiently be concluded a duty.

Mat.6. 2. 6, 15. compared

2. A further evidence of the ſame I take it to be, that *Faſting* is by our Saviour in that Sermon of his upon the Mount, which delivers

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to us the ſum of the Chriſtian Law, or rule of Evangelical duties, ranked with *Prayer* and *Almes-giving*; (which are undoubted duties) and reſcued from the Phariſaical abuſes of it, the true manner of it being inſinuated: Inſomuch, that it may be juſtly demanded, how comes it to ſtand in the Chriſtian Law? to what end needed its practice to be vindicated from corruption, and aſſerted, as it is by Chriſt, to its purity, if it were not a Chriſtian duty? Beſides,

3. We find God in its ſeaſon calling for it; of old by his Prophet *Joel*, *Sanctifie a Faſt, call an Aſſembly*: which place though it intend a publick Faſt; yet when the caſe ſhall be ſo with a private perſon, as the Prophet ſuppoſeth it with that people it will by *Analogy*, and in reaſon hold of a private one. (And it is evident our Saviour in St. *Matthew* ſpoke of thoſe private Faſts, which every one is by him ſuppoſed to conſecrate unto God). Then, who knows not that the *Afflicting of the ſoul* (touching which we meet with

Part. IV. Chap. 3.

ſo many commands, and ſuch frequent mention in the old Teſtament) doth mainly intend Faſting? And as to the new Teſtament, further yet: though our Savionr once tells us, the ſeaſon for his Diſciples faſting was not then come, *while the Bridegroom was with them*, yet at the ſame time he tells us, its ſeaſon would not be long to, *and then they ſhould faſt*.

Mat. 9.15.

4. Again, the conſtant ſenſe of the world, and of all the Saints of God in all ages (amongſt whom, by how much ſoever any have been more zealous, by ſo much the more hath he been in the exerciſe of Faſting) is an argument (no whit contemptible) of its being a duty. Not only many the moſt ſerious Practiſts of natural Religion, and the Saints under the Law faſted, yea and the Phariſee too twice a week, but devout Chriſtians every where, have ever been to us enſamples hereof. And,

5. (Which ſets it off with more advantage) we find not only the commendation of them for this practice,

practice, but the recompence of it with many signal blessings recorded in Scripture: which recompence God doth not use to give to will-worship. Thus we find *Anna* commended for her continuing in the Temple day and night, *serving God with Fastings and Prayers*. Where it is observable, that *Fasting* is by the Holy Ghost reckoned as one part of her *serving God*. And that blessed vision, which led *Cornelius* to the knowledg of Christ, was vouchsafed to him upon a day, he had fasted till about the ninth hour (which is with us three a clock) and then too, we find him not at meat, but prayer.

Luk. 2. 36

Acts 13.

All which cannot but enforce, that though it be not *always* and *indispensably* a duty, as is Faith, Repentance, Charity, and such others; yet is it as far a duty, as any thing can be, that is not required absolutely and for it self; and that therefore whensoever there is occasion for it, (and no Christian, as is evident from the Ends of Fasting, can be long without due occasions requiring

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ring it) it is to be performed; and being ſo, if it ſhould be performed in manner of a free-will offering, or oftner than in ſtrictneſs the Chriſtian might ſeem to have need of it; yet if it be done, as it ſhould be, it is likely to be acceptable to God.

But this makes it ſeaſonable to enquire, how often a Chriſtian is to Faſt.

CHAP. IV.

How often a Chriſtian is to Faſt.

IN anſwer whereunto it muſt be ſaid, that no certain or conſtant rule, as to all perſons, can or may be given herein: nor will the times of Faſting be the ſame to all; ſome men having more *need*, others leſs (if not need, yet) *opportunity*. We are aſſured by the ends to which it ſerves, that many men's particular conditions (which haply leave them none other means to mortifie the fleſh, but this) make it a duty very neceſſary

neceſſary for them to be much in. On the other ſide, thoſe who ever feed ſparingly and temperately, and have an evener conſtitution, leſs inclined to carnality and inordinate affections, than have other men, ſeem to have leſs need of this taming diſcipline. And again, thoſe whoſe labours are daily and hard, and whoſe life is ſervile, many times neither have ſo much need, nor ſo much opportunity of Faſting, as have thoſe whoſe life is eaſier. Yet foraſmuch as it is (according to what hath been above inſinuated) a piece of *Afflicting a man's ſoul*, and ſo a neceſſary piece of contrition and repentance (which hath commonly ſomewhat of *indignation* againſt a man's ſelf in it;) there is none who can think himſelf wholly diſpenſed with for it, or to have no need at all of it. But I ſay every man's conſcience and Chriſtian diſcretion muſt in the fear of God ſet to himſelf the rule, how often he is to Faſt: for that every one beſt knows his own needs, and it would be very ſinful in ſome, not to uſe more ſtrict and oftner Faſtings, than others;

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others; and ſome on the contrary muſt be very injurious to themſelves, ſhould they uſe ſo much Faſting, as others (if they duly conſider their leiſure and condition) cannot but think themſelves in duty bound to. This is the ſum of what in general may be poſitively determined. Yet it is worthy our conſideration, and may be a guide to particular perſons to remember,

Firſt, That it is a practice of very great antiquity to *faſt twice a week*, and was in uſe as is evident before our Saviour's days, and by him not cenſured in the Phariſee upon any other account, than becauſe he was proud and conceited of it, uſing to reflect upon it in oſtentation of his own holineſs, and ſcorn of others. And it is a very worthy note of St. *Chryſoſtom*'s, that we ſhould only *avoid the Phariſee's pride, but not neglect his performances*, as on the other ſide, *forſake the Publican's ſins, but retain his humility.* There is alſo a conſtitution, which *although* perhaps it pretend to more authority

rity and antiquity than it ought, yet must be acknowledged to be ancient and not unreasonable, that we should fast *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, because *on the one, the Lord was betrayed, and on the other, crucified*: and it is beyond controversie, that the primitive Christians used to have their solemn assemblies upon those days, not much less constant than upon the Lord's days.

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Constitut. a Clem. Roman. collect. Lib 5. Cap. 15.

Secondly, That if this course be not always to be used (which yet I know not what should hinder, except a man want leisure) yet at certain seasons, as in *Lent* and *Ember weeks*, the commands and custom of the Church will ingage me to as much as this amounts to, if not to more. And he to whom the commands of our Present, and continued practice of the Catholick Church, in devotionals signifie nothing, is surely a man of a strange humorous sanctity.

Lastly, It is out of question, that there is no Christian can walk strictly, and keep a good conscience towards God and man, who hath not

his

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Dr. Hammond's Pract. Catech. Lib 3.

his ſolemn ſet days for the performing that great and weighty duty of humiliation, in calling himſelf to an account for all his ways, and confeſſing his ſins more particularly before God: and thoſe days ſhould not be too ſlow in their returns [that is too ſeldom] *leſt his ſoul ſhould be too deep in arrears* [that is, leſt there ſhould be ſuch a long ſcore of his ſins unrepented of, that he think it an infinite and endleſs work to repent of them] *and ſo be loth to come to an account at all. It is very reaſonable therefore for every man and woman of any tolerable leiſure to ſet apart one day in a week for this purpoſe; or if the whole day, or any other part of it may not be ſpared from the buſineſs of his calling, yet the dinner time, that day, may be borrowed from eating, and thus more uſefully imployed without diſturbance to the affairs*, or injury to the health, of any ordinary perſon. I do not ſay that this day ought always to be one and the ſame: it may be in one week one day, and the next another, according as my occaſions will beſt bear: Nay even

after

after I have appointed it, upon unexpected events it may undoubtedly be altered without guilt; but wholly neglected it cannot be without a ſinful omiſſion, except upon ſome urgent or more than ordinary buſineſs.

CHAP V.

Of the Preparatory acts for Private Faſting days.

THE worſhip of God is ever beſt celebrated, when ſome kind of preparation is made for it: It will be meet therefore, that ſomewhat I do by way of preparation for my private Faſts.

And one piece of preparation, as well for theſe days, as for the Lord's day it ſelf (though indeed ſomewhat remote, or afar off) it will be, to be diligent other days in my calling, and well to husband both my time and eſtate. For if he, who hath not by his ſix days labour made

Part. IV. Chap. 5.

made ſuch proviſion for himſelf and his, as that he may be without care of providing upon the ſeventh day, will ſcarce reſt that ſeventh day unto God without diſtraction (as ſeems to be ſuggeſted to us by thoſe words [*Six days ſhalt thou labour*] being put into the fourth Command, ment) much leſs will he be able to allow himſelf conſtantly more time in a week than a ſeventh day comes to, to wit, ſome part of every day, and a conſiderable part beſides of one of the ſix days (which is to be his Faſt) to the ſervice of God. I would therefore have every man not to incumber himſelf in this world more than he needs muſt. We ſhould learn to know when we have enough, and allow our ſelves ſome part of our time to enjoy, as well as all to get. But this is preparation very far off.

The firſt Act of more immediate preparation for theſe my Faſting-days will be, prudently to contrive, upon foreſight and conſideration of my weeks buſineſs, what day or days they are, in which I can beſt

ſpare

ſpare time for this work; and theſe days, or that day will be the fitteſt to be pitched upon, in which I may the moſt freely converſe with God without the diſturbance, which much buſineſs neceſſarily brings. Beſides the time ſpent in my ordinary courſe of devotions, which are not upon my Faſts to be omitted, under pretence of making amends for them, or running them up into my Penitentary performances; I cannot upon thoſe days, when I allow leaſt, allow leſs than two hours, and upwards, to the peculiar work of my Faſts. So much time therefore at the leaſt, I ſay, I muſt reſolve ſuch a day to devote.

Which being reſolved upon, it will be fit (as a ſecond act of my more immediate preparation) in the devotions of the evening before, to ſpend a petition or two in my prayers to God, *that he would by his gracious Spirit prepare me for the work which I intend the next day, ſoftning my heart, and giving me to underſtand my errors, that I may duly lament them, and truly amend them*; which

Petitions

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Petitions (even in these words now used, if I please) I may easily see a fit place to insert in my prayers. And the day being come, unto my morning devotions it will be expedient to add some such short prayer, as this which follows.

O Lord, who seest the purposes of all hearts, and hast been privy to the intentions of thy servant touching calling himself this day to an account of his ways, and humbling himself before thee for all his transgressions; Be thou in mercy present to me by the preventions and assistance of thy grace, that I may with a true heart and contrite spirit perform what I intend. Grant, that no worldly cares or business may so take off my mind from thee, but that I may be able forthwith to return, and without distraction to

to employ my whole ſoul in my deſigned devotions to the glory of thy Name, my own amendment and comfort here, and everlaſting bleſſedneſs hereafter, in and through thy Son Jeſus Chriſt my Lord *Amen.*

And laſtly, my morning devotions being thus finiſhed, until the time come, that I have reſolved to retire, I muſt endeavour to converſe, and behave my ſelf in my ordinary affairs ſo warily, as that nothing may diſcompoſe, diſorder, or diſturb me; no worldly deſign too much poſſeſs my thoughts, according as above I have prayed.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The order of Humiliation or Penitentiary Devotions.

SECT. I.

The entrance unto the work.

THat time being now come, which I appointed to ſpend with God in my Cloſet; I muſt religiouſly obſerve mine appointment: For albeit the reſolve was only private, and never proceeded without my own breaſt or Cloſet, yet hath God taken notice of it, and it ſtands on record in his omniſcience: and by breaking theſe my private and (as haply I may judge) leſs material reſolutions, I ſhall ſoon learn to break my word and vows too in other matters, both with God and man.

Coming therefore at my time appointed into my Cloſet, I reverently kneel

kneel down before God, and having the ſenſe of his preſence and all-ſeeing eye upon my heart, humbly begin in ſome ſuch ſhort prayer, as is this which follows.

I Am come, O Lord, into thy preſence upon work, which no one hath more need to do than my ſelf, to conſider my ways, and repent of my ſins, and turn to thee. But I have an hard heart, not apt to relent; and dry eyes, ſuch, at leaſt, which ſeldom ſhed tears for my ſins. O that thou wouldſt bow the Heavens and come down, and melt my ſoul in ſuch godly ſorrow, which might work repentance not to be repented of. Open mine eyes, and help me to ſee into mine heart: bring my ſins to my remembrance, and ſet them in order before me, that an holy ſhame and confuſion

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confuſion may cover my face for them, and thou beholding my contrition maiſt accept it, and both pardon me and aſſiſt me hereafter by thy grace, that I may live more *godly*, *righteouſly*, and *ſoberly* in this preſent world, and attain unto bleſſedneſs with thy ſelf in the world to come, through the merits of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord. and Saviour. *Amen.*

SECT. II.

Of Reading, ſo as to fit my ſelf for Self-examination.

SOME ſuch ſupplication being, with all my heart, made unto God, I may haply find it not to be alwayes the beſt courſe forthwith to fall upon the examination of my ſelf: For, for this I ſhall be the fitter, when awakened and made more attentive

tentive to my ſelf by ſome other exerciſe. It may be proper therefore to ſpend an hour in the reading ſome honeſt Practical Book, which treateth ſeverally of thoſe duties which we owe both to God, others, and our ſelves, to wit, upon that particular Book, which, knowing to be very good, I have choſen and ſingled out to my ſelf to read and practiſe, ſuch as are, the never enough commended Doctor *Hammond*'s *Practical Catechiſm*, or (if that ſeem to any too difficult) that no leſs excellent, than plain and truly Learned, Book, *The whole duty of Man*, (for the Author of which our whole Church owes praiſes unto God, and, if he be yet alive, prayers.) And in my reading hereof, I muſt endeavour to read

Firſt, with underſtanding: ſo that it is not ſo much the repeating to my ſelf the words, as conſidering and digeſting the ſubſtance of them, which I muſt account reading of them. I muſt therefore read and ſtudy the Book, as Scholars do their Books; and if there be any mate-

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rial thing which I donot underſtand, mark it, ſo that I may inform my ſelf, by adviſeing with ſome more able perſon than my ſelf.

Secondly, I müſt read all with application to my ſelf, remembring that all this concerns me, and endeavouring to ſee how it concerns me, whether I perform the duty I read of, as I ſhould, or how I neglect it, *&c.*

By tihs means, taking upon every of my Faſting days a part, my Book will in convenient ſeaſon be read over: which when it is, it muſt not be thrown aſide, but read through again and again, with the ſame diligence till I am perfect in it. Nor ought the third orfourth reading of a good, profitable, and practical Treatiſe, to be tedious or unpleaſant to me: for that Chriſtian duties are not new, but have been, and always will be the ſame, and multitude of Books do but confound plain heads. All wiſe men know, that to make a mans ſelf maſter of one good Book is better than to have ſlightly read an hundred, which were not either

either throughly understood or digested. To keep therefore thus to one good Book, which may instruct me of the sum of my Christian duty, till I have fully made it mine own, is my most edifying course. Part. IV. Chap. 6.

SECT. III.

Of Self-examination, and the view of our life.

THis my exercise of reading being over, it will be seasonable now to fall to the examination of my self touching my *sins*. And here I shall find a very good help of the former work of reading, especially after some considerable use of it, when I am once come to know my several duties: for certain it is, *No man can see what he hath done amiss, what he hath left undone* (which two heads of *Omission* and *Commission* contain under them all actual sins) till he seeth what he should have done. Now this duty of Self-examination, a man may be supposed 1. Of sins.

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either to be a ſtranger in, and little to have practiſed; or elſe to have been much in it, and to be throughly verſt in his own heart and life.

He who is a ſtranger to it, hath unqueſtionably more work to do, than the other. That he may therefore do his buſineſs throughly, he muſt begin with thoſe very firſt years which he can remember, and trace ſin from his infancy, through his youth, to his riper and preſent years. He muſt ſee, what Devil firſt entred him, I mean what ſins firſt ſeized him, how they have grown up and continued with him. Singularly uſeful in this caſe will be thoſe Heads of Self-examination, in that admirable honeſt book, now commended, *The whole Duty of Man*, in the devotional part annext thereto, the uſe and application of which is alſo ſhewed at the end of thoſe heads. But this will be too long a work for an hour or two. Such a perſon therefore had need to ſet apart whole days for this purpoſe, till he hath a little recovered himſelf, and ſet his accounts ſtreighter with God.

Yet

Yet must he not, while he is enquiring after unknown or forgotten sins, neglect to repent of his fresher and known transgressions. If therefore so it be, that for the present he cannot recollect himself, and make a diligent search into the whole course of his life, yet must he confess and bewail what he knows of himself, and together acknowledge, how much he is in arrears, which he hath forgotten, or at present doth not see, and for all humbly beg mercy. But this not so, as wholly to put off further enquiry: but having this Fast examined himself touching so many years or months, (according as his life finds his thoughts work) upon his next Fast to proceed farther, and so on the next still farther, till he come home to his present age. Now in this sifting of my life, if I can, it will be very useful to me, and much further a distinct Repentance to use my Pen, and through each year set down my sins: By this means I shall be able much better to consider them, and so, both know more of my self and of the deceitful ways,

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which ſin hath to gain upon me.

And becauſe, as I owe to God *Confeſſion* and Repentance of my ſins, ſo I owe alſo acknowledgment and *thanks* for his *Mercies*, therefore in this enquiry, it will be neceſſary to obſerve Gods remarkable Mercies and deliverances to me, recording theſe alſo year by year, as my ſins.

2. Of Bleſſings.

Thus will the ſight of his Mercies aggravate my ſins, and increaſe my repentance; and the ſight of my ſins parallel with his mercies, commend his goodneſs and enhance my thankfulneſs, both which are ſingular benefits.

3. Of Afflictions.

And becauſe even afflictions have their uſe, and are to be accounted for, if therefore I find any conſiderable adverſity or croſs with which God hath exerciſed me, this alſo is to be regiſtred as the former. If it did me good, I owe to God *thanks* for it: if not, I owe *repentance* for being incorrigible.

Being thus come to my preſent time, it will become me not to run in arrears again, but every Faſt-day ſtill

ſtill to make my accounts even; and to that purpoſe to take care, as aforeſaid, that theſe my Faſts be not too ſeldom.

Suppoſing therefore, that I am a perſon who have ſo far practiſed Self-examination, as that I have formerly taken account of all my life; That, which I ſhall have chiefly to enquire into upon each return of theſe my Faſting days, will be,

Firſt, What new ſins or *Commiſſions* I have been guilty of ſince my laſt day of accounting.

Secondly, What *neglects*: eſpecially, if I have formerly made any vow or new engagements to God, how I have obſerved or ſlighted them.

Thirdly In what poſture or *temper my heart* hath continued, and at preſent is: whether ſoft, tender, penitent, conſiderative, and in awe of God; or whether dull, careleſs, inſenſible, or otherwayes out of order and prone to its old luſts.

Laſtly, How the *providence* of God hath carried towards me ſithence; what *mercies* received,

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what *afflictions* ſent upon me, and what hath been *my carriage* anſwerably. Theſe heads of examination if I cannot remember, I muſt here turn to, and put the queſtion to my ſelf as to every point particularly. And whatever I find more remarkable, let it be *regiſtred* in mine *Accomptal* (ſo I call that Paper-book, in which I uſe to keep account of my life and ſpiritual ſtate) whereof as is above ſaid, I ſhall find ſingular advantage in the following part of my Life.

SECT. IV.

Of the Endeavour of Godly ſorrow, how to work our ſelves to it.

SIN is not ſuch a thing, the knowledge of which is deſirable for it ſelf, but only in order to ſomwhat elſe, which it is apt to beget, to wit, *Godly ſorrow and repentance.* My ſins therefore being thus known, I am to ſet my ſelf about ſorrowing

ing for them, and repenting of them.

And to Godly ſorrow the readieſt courſe will be, more fully to fix my thoughts upon the ſins, of which in my examination of my ſelf I have found my ſelf guilty, to look upon them ſo, as that *mine eye may affect my heart*, my attent conſideration of them may move and grieve me, as it ought. To this purpoſe I am to conſider particularly,

Firſt, The foulneſs of my particular ſins in themſelves and in their own nature, how vile they make me how unable I ſhould be to look men in the face, if they knew all theſe unworthy acts by me, which I do of my ſelf, and God far better than my ſelf: how vile therefore muſt they needs render me in his holy Eye.

See the whole Duty of Man, Part it. 3. Sect. 5.

Secondly, The ſeveral Aggravations which they admit; the chief of which, and thoſe which are apteſt to affect me, I may take to be thoſe which follow

1. Againſt how great *light* and how clear *knowledge* of Gods will I have ſinned. I knew ſuch and ſuch

actions to be sinful, when yet I ventured upon them.

2. Against how many *checks of Conscience* I committed them. Did not my own heart at that very instant smite me, telling me of the wrath of God and etrnal flames belonging to those, who do such things.

3. Against how many *engagements and obligations* to the contrary have I sinned? 1. My own vows and covenant both in my baptism and since. 2. Gods mercies and forbearance, which should have invited and led me to repentance. 3. Gods judgments and heavie hand many times upon me, which should have taught me righteousnes. 4. Had I no hinderances in the way, which I broke through? It may be God's holy providence cast somewhat in, which did a while retard my commission of the sin, and if I had not been desperatly bent upon it, might have diverted me, and dasht the temptation. All these were engagements to the contrary, and have not I broke through many of them?

4. Was

4. Was not I the *tempter* and Devil to my self in them? Did not I set my self on work without Satan's incitation of me thereto?

Nay, 5. Besides that I have committed them upon my own motion, did not I also commit them upon *deliberation* and advice? This must argue either much unbelief, or a strange contempt of God and judgment.

6. Is this the first time of the commission of this or that sin, or is it not now by *frequent iteration* become *customary*, habitual, and almost a *second nature* to me? And I hereby more a child of wrath, than I was born?

7. Whether or no have not many of my sins been *publickly dishonourable* to God, and scandalous to my Christian profession? Hath not mine example, if not mine enticements, drawn in others to the same sin, or driven others out of conceit with Religion? Wretched man that I am, that I should so hold [perhaps teach] the faith as to make Infidels.

Lastly, Something of grievousness the *circumstances of time and place*

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place, &c. may add thereto, which ought not to be overlooked.

If the consideration of this the foulness and grievousness of my sins move not, or too lightly touch mine heart, let me in the third and last place seriously consider, what I have incurr'd and merited by my sins. Certain it is, God is for them displeased with me: I am out of his favour, and when I look up to him, I can expect nothing but his wrath and curse, wrath and all its bitter effects upon my *body*, in sickness, pains, and loathsom maladies; upon my *soul*, in horror of mind, inquietude, and torments of conscience; upon mine *estate*, in disappointments, losses, and ruins; upon my *Relations*, in making them griefs and burdens to me; upon my *Name*, in infamy & reproaches; nay, upon my very Prayers, in having them become an abomination before God. In a word, Gods wrath and curse in all I have & all I do, is the only portion my sins have made mine in this present world, and in that future and eternal world judgment without mercy, horrour and

and the gnawing worm, and torment, everlasting, so pure, so exquisite, as not to admit of so much refreshment as what a drop of water would give to a scorched tongue. This is the wages due to my sins, & which, except God in great mercy divert it, will infallibly befal me: & divert it he will not, except upon my sincere and hearty repentance, the thing which I have in present consideration, and with all my soul must endeavour, as I tender everlasting bliss, and the escaping everlasting torments.

Through such heads as these, should I trace my sins, especially those of them, which are most gross: and in my Meditations dwell so upon those considerations, as may, if possible, move my sorrow, at least breed an utter aversion of the sin & a loathing of my self for it: And if it be so, that I cannot shed tears, and really mourn over my sins, yet if I can find in my self, a through displeasure with my self for my sin, and an hatred of it, together with an earnest desire to be freed from the habit and

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and power of the ſin, as well as from the guilt of it, this I may conclude to be a ſorrow of mind, and ought therefore to cheriſh in my ſoul.

SECT. V.

Of Repentance, which is the effect of godly ſorrow, its true nature and way of practiſe.

2 Cor 7. 10.

THe Apoſtle ſaith, *Godly ſorrow worketh repentance, which need not to be repented of.* Now that *repentance* may ſeem to conſiſt of two things. Of a *full purpoſe* of heart to forſake ſin, which is a change of mind; and of *hearty endeavours* againſt it, which is a change of life.

Μετάνοια.

Μετεμέλεια.

Firſt, I ſay, I may not think I have repented of my ſin, till I have taken up a *full purpoſe* and reſolution of mind againſt it for the future. As long as there is in me any intention of returning to it again, I am an impenitent wretch. Now ſuch purpoſe and reſolution the foregoing

ing consideration of my sin is apt to beget: and therefore by laying such thoughts truly home unto mine heart, by imploying my mind much on them, I ought to endeavour to work my self up to such resolution and never to sit down contented, or think my self penitent, till I am so wrought upon. I shall not much need to be minded, that during such endeavours, I ought to intermix with my meditations frequent petitions to Almighty God, whose Grace only it is, which is sufficient for me for the turning of my heart from sin.

Now purposes and resolutions are rotten, except endeavours to fulfil them follow. This therefore is the second part of repentance, that as I have *resolved*, so *I endeavour* against sin.

And this *endeavour* against sin seems to have two parts, the one of which may best be acted in my Closet, the other must be acted any where and every where.

The first part of the endeavour against sin is, to do what we can to

mortifie

Part. IV. Chap 6.

mortifie the habit, that is, the inclination, readineſs, and cuſtomary proneneſs, which we have to the ſin, which is to be forſaken. And that muſt be done,

1. By *conſidering* with my ſelf what *means*, or *remedies*, I can find out againſt that ſin. Certain it is, *the more I can reſtain or keep back my ſelf from the actual commiſſion or doing of any ſin, the more will the power of that ſin decay in me*, the leſs inclined ſhall I be thereto. Wherefore if I cannot at the firſt root out the habit, or overcome that miſerable inclinedneſs, which I find thereto, yet let me endeavour to find out ſuch means, which may keep me from the acting the ſin, and, I ſay, that cuſtomary proneneſs unto the ſin will by the grace of God decay.

Now in general, it will be a true and proper *Remedy* againſt any ſin, to conſider the occaſions or inducements, which chiefly lead me thereunto, and to provide as well as I can, againſt them.

Whether or no is it a ſin which is deeply

deeply rooted in my nature and constitution? or whether or no is it such an one, which by my way of living, converse, and custom, I have settled in my self? if it be of the latter sort, the breaking my self of that custom, the altering, so far as is possible, such converse as hath brought me into it, is a very good remedy against it. But if it be a sin innate, and after a sort planted in my very make and complexion, it is more difficult to subdue: But the way will be, (1.) To take such course with my self, as before said, that for the future I may keep my self from the acting of it, as much as may be; that is, first to abstain from, and provide against all such occasions which have or may blow up the flame of my inbred lusts. And then (2.) If *fasting*, *watching*, or any such usage of my body will abate the strength of that particular lust, to practise it diligently: And further (3.) To make it a constant petition in my daily prayers to God, that he, by that Spirit, by which he is able to subdue all things unto himself, would

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would mortifie in me the affection and luſt, which I have after that ſin. And by preſevering in ſuch courſe, no doubt but at length, through the divine Grace, I ſhall overcome it. Theſe *means* therefore having *conſulted* of (attending to my particular ſin,) the next ſtep which I am to take in the mortifying of it, is,

2. To *reſolve* there before God, *diligently to uſe thoſe means*, which I have particularly conſulted of, and *ſo* forthwith to *order and contrive all my affairs* (as far as in me lies) that I may without any partiality uſe them all according to the beſt of my skill, and in the moſt effectual manner that I know.

The ſecond part of the *endeavour* againſt ſin (which will not be ſo much the work of my Cloſet, as of my life) is *diligence in* the *uſing* of theſe *means* (which I have thus conſidered of, found out, and reſolved upon) wherever I am, and whenſoever I have opportunity.

And particularly, as neer as we can, to keep a *conſtant watch* over our minds, our eyes, our words, our

our actions. If we find a temptation insinuating it self, immediately to repress it in the begining; lifting up our hearts to God, imploring his Grace, minding our own resolutions, and pursuing a fixed method. The *Devil* will certainly fly, if thus resisted. And this we must be sure to do in such sins, which have been most familiar to us, or else we shall never overcome them, nor will our repentance be effectual.

Now that I may do all this the better, it will very much help, if I write down some abstract or principal Heads of my penitential Devotions before God in my privacy, which I am to do in mine *Accomptal*; I mean, if I record every days Fasting, and the issue thereof, what I found new in mine estate, what I resolved on, what means I considered of against such and such sins, *&c.* We find that they not only made a *Covenant*, but put it in *writing, and sealed it before the Lord* in their solelemn Fast. *Nehem.* 9. 38. This will be one way to secure me against being

Part IV. Chap. 6.

being ſlighty in my penitentials: and it may beſides much both confirm and quicken me in my execution of theſe my reſolves, to read them over written by my own hand before God in private.

And being thus regiſtred, it will be good for me to be often (when I come into my Cloſet about my devotions, and examine my ſelf) looking on and reading them over, leſt *forgetfulneſs ſhould betray me into the breach of them.*

SECT. VI.

An exemplification of the former Rules in two ſins.

NOW to the end that this moſt neceſſary practice may be as plain as poſſible, it may haply conduce to ſet down ſome particular examples, in which thoſe general rules may appear practiſed. And foraſmuch, as it was before ſaid, that all ſins, of which we ſhall find our ſelves frequently guilty, are either ſuch

ſuch which are *rooted in our particular complexion*, and ſo may eſpecially be called, *our* iniquities) or ſuch which by *ſome outward occaſion* (as converſe or manner of living) we *fall into*, one inſtance ſhall be of ſuch a ſin, which is commonly too too much rooted in mens natures or particular *Craſes*, to wit, *Uncleanneſs*; the other in ſuch an one, which, though haply a man may be naturally inclined to, yet commonly may be more truly referred to the head of contracted than of in-born evils, and that is, *Trifling away our time.* Part. IV. Chap. 6.

Firſt then, ſuppoſe that upon examination of my ſelf, one ſin, whereof I find my ſelf guilty, *be Uncleanneſs*, and this I find diverſly to have run through a great part of my life. Touching this; certain it is, that I repent not of it as I ſhould, if I ſet not my ſelf to root it out. Wherefore, according to the rules laid down, I thus proceed.

Being come now ſo far in my devotions upon my Faſt-day as to Meditation, and having in my Meditations chiefly employed my thoughts upon See Sect. 4

Part IV. Chap. 9.

upon my ſelf, whereby I have found my ſelf guilty of this ſin, I ſet upon the repenting of it. To that purpoſe I endeavour to ſorrow for it. I therefore conſider, *firſt*, how *grievous a ſin that is in it ſelf*. And in this caſe it may be, that good practical book which I have choſen to my ſelf to read and ſtudy, may much help me, and diſcover to me the grievouſneſs of it in its own nature. This being done, I conſider how *grievous my commiſſion of it is*: what *particular aggravations* all my actions of this kind admit. Here I open this my book, and examine it by thoſe aggravating particulars mentioned: Further, I conſider the *evil* it hath brought, and may bring upon me; wrath here, and wrath to come. All which cordially employing my thoughts upon, I *endeavour to affect my ſoul* therewith, and to work in my ſelf a *reall ſorrow* and *loathing* of ſuch courſes: This ſorrow will work repentance, to wit, Firſt a *reſolution* againſt what I loath, and then an *endeavour againſt it*, *as* well by *conſulting remedies and means againſt it*

Sect. 4.

as

as by putting my ſelf into a way of *uſing ſuch means*, of which particular rules have been juſt now given. And the reſult of my Humiliation thus far, I, as briefly as I can, regiſter in mine Accomptal, in ſome ſuch ſort as this.

An. Dom.— Januar.— *Faſted: I found my ſelf guilty of Uncleanneſs. This I conſidered to be in it ſelf a very grievous ſin.*

1. *It defiles my very body, makes me loathſom.*

2. *It debaſeth and dulls my ſoul.*

3. *It is that which nature it ſelf is aſhamed of.*

4. *God moſt perfectly hates it; and therefore when he expreſſeth the vileſt ſins, calls them Whoredom.* Eze. 16. 15.

5. *It is one of thoſe ſins, which God ſeldom ſuffers to eſcape unpuniſhed here.*

6. *I ſhall never be able to like my ſelf, or have any inward content in my ſelf while I practiſe it.*

7. *Perſeverance in it will undoubtedly deſtroy my very body and health, as well as ſoul.*

[*Each*

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Each of these, and more than these, as God shall be pleased to assist me in my Meditations, I am supposed to have attently considered.]

My particular commissions in this case have the following aggravations. They have been done,

1. *Knowingly.* 2. [*as I find it with myself*] *possibly against checks of conscience.* 3. *Against my vow of baptisme expresly, &c.* 4. *Spontaneously.* 5. *Deliberately in such and such cases.* 6. *Frequently, and thus long, &c.*

See Sect. 4

Whereupon, most humbly begging pardon of God, I resolved with all my might to endeavour against it. To that purpose I considered of those means against it.

1. *Spare diet: frequent Fasting: avoiding high meats.*

2. *Spare sleeping: not lying down till sleep compel me, rising early, or at least as soon as sleep leaves me.*

2. *Hard usage of my body: lying hard, using prostrations, or tiring postures in my prayers, &c.*

4. *Praying often, and much conversing with God in holy duties, which will make me ashamed of such carnal delights*

delights and ſordid enjoyments.

5. *Avoiding light company, light diſcourſe, geſture, looks, gazing, &c.*

6. *Conſidering death, and that in its pomp and terribleneſs, looking much on Sceletons, dead mens ſculls, bones, or contemplating conſumptive and ghaſtly viſages.*

7. *Not venturing my ſelf on any opportunities or temptations to it.*

8. *Checking all temptations and motions of this kind at the very firſt perceiving them; flying to God, diverting my thoughts by Prayer, &c.*

Theſe I then reſolved to practiſe, and will therefore frequently read over. Amen. Lord, thy grace!

But it may be, this is not my ſin: however, it will teach me how to deal in humbling my ſelf for that which is. Suppoſe then I find my ſelf guilty of *trifling away my time*: There is no repenting hereof without amendment: But what courſe may I take to be truly penitent for it?

The Anſwer is: I muſt proceed as before. *Meditating, Reſolving,*

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Consulting, and by all means, *Confirming* my self against it. And having so proceeded, possibly the result of what I am to register in my Accomptal, may be to this effect, or in this form.

[*Such a day fasted*] *I found my self guilty of trifling away my time. I considered the grievousness thereof.*

1. *This is truly* Idleness, *what name soever else I give it. For*, Idleness is not the doing nothing, but the not doing what I should, when *I* should, *Now idleness is undoubtedly a grievous sin, as having not only its own guilt in it, but the guilt of many more sins, which it occasioneth.*

2. *This is a frustrating the end of my being, as far as in me lies, and a living to no purpose: Now that how unworthy is it of a reasonable creature!*

3. *I must needs be unprepared for Heaven, and my great Accounts, while guilty hereof. Every hour stands on record in God's omniscience: and I cannot, it may be, give account of three hours in a day.*

4. *How evidently do I ruine my self,*

ſelf, not only as to the future, but as to this preſent world hereby? What might I do, *and* be, *were I careful of my time?* Part. V. Chap. 6.

Further, for me to do this, how grievous is it?

1. *I know it to be ſinful.* 2. *When I have remembred my duties to be undone, I have yet neglected them, againſt the preſent warnings of my conſcience.* 3. *How many ways have I been engaged againſt this? So much, So worthy a Work to do, and So much of my time already ſpent,* &c. [Eaſie it is hereby to ſee how I may proceed according to my particular ſtate.]

Theſe Meditations being finiſhed, and, as briefly as I can, entred, it remains that I enter *my reſolution* of endeavour againſt this ſin as before: and then ſtudy *meet remedies* thereto. Now this ſin not being always *natural* to them in whom it is found, but *adventitious*, it concerns me to conſider, as before admoniſhed, how I came to be guilty hereof, and to ſuit my remedies to thoſe occaſions.

1. It may be I *am inſiſted about*

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many things, and ſo either neglect all, or (what chiefly concerns me) my proper duties. Perhaps I cannot endure that which ſhould be my buſineſs, but am fickle, deſultorie, and rambling in mine imployment, and though I am not much guilty of doing nothing, yet do I not do what I ſhould: and this is undoubtedly a piece of *Idleneſs*, as aboveſaid, for a man to neglect the buſineſs of his ſeaſon and of his calling; and to be moſt taken up in things which leaſt concern him. Now here the *remedy* will be to *conſider*, what it is that is *my proper buſineſs*: to put my work into a certain mould and order: and then to ſet my ſelf a task daily, and engage my ſelf (as well as I can) to ſo much of it, before I divert to any Eccentrical occupation, I mean, to the buſying my ſelf in things, which do not properly concern me.

2. It may be, I uſe to *ſit and talk* away my time with friends and company: much goes in idle viſits; I have a nature, which is too ſociable, and when I meet with company to my

my mind, I know not how to deny my ſelf of their ſociety and diſcourſe: and if I do not meet with ſuch, I am apt to leave my buſineſs and go ſeek ſuch. Here the Remedy will be (partly the ſame with the former) Prudently to *proportion* my *time to* my *buſineſs*. So much of my buſineſs have I reſolved to do; that reſolution muſt not be broken: ſo much time will that work take me up; ſo much, my devotions: wherefore I have but ſo much left for ſociety; more therefore I muſt not take. If therefore I am lite into any acceptable company, it will become me often to conſider, how goes the time? ſo much of my impoſed task yet lies undone, *&c.* Part IV. Chap. 6.

3. It may be *much* of my time is *ſpent in dulneſs*, ſitting ſtill, *&c.* It may be my conſtitution is ſuch, that if I eat heartily, I am a great while unfit for my work, and ſo feeding freely lays upon me a kind of neceſſity of being idle. Here the remedy will be to reſolve upon ſparer diet, to bridle mine appetite, and eat leſs

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when I do eat; or if I cannot that, to eat seldomer, and to be at least but once a day unfit for my work: which time of unfitness, if I will well husband my time, I may best allow for society; it will be fit enough for that.

4. It may be *vexations*, anger, or giving way to passion, many times indispoſeth me for business. Here the remedy will be to watch against such disturbances, to endeavour meekness, patience, and the mortification of unruly affections.

5. It may be *sollicitude* about this world, thoughtfulness, cares, take up many of mine hours: and then, mine head being full, I cannot call home my mind, and fall to work; and when by my care I cannot find any expedient for what I sought, this breeds discontent, envy of other mens ease, happiness, freedom, *&c.* And seriously it is a great deal of time, which narrow fortunes thus steal away from some men. Here the remedy will be, study of content, frugality, wise husbanding mine estate, proportioning mine expences to

to my revenues. And ſo whatever I find to be the occaſion of my loſs or expence of time, let me ſtudy a ſuitable remedy thereto, and regiſter as well the occaſion as its correſponding remedy. Let me then proceed to *reſolve upon the uſe* of ſuch *remedies*, and to order my particular affairs in ſuch ſort, that I may uſe them with the beſt advantage: and ſuch reſolutions let me always *enter* upon my *Accomptal*, for the faſtning them both upon mine heart and memory.

SECT. VII.

A further conſideration of Repentance, with reference to ſome particular ſins.

REpentance may ſeem to have been conſidered hitherto with a Relation to *habitual ſins*, that is, ſuch ſins which either by nature or cuſtom are rooted in the heart, and have begot in the Soul a readineſs, and inclinedneſs unto them. But ſurely, if I throughly underſtand the

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practice of it, as it hath been hitherto described, I cannot be at a loss in what sort it ought to be exercised, when I find my self guilty of one *particular fall, or sin*, the habit, or customary readiness to which, I have not yet contracted: for the substance of my work is still the same, *viz.*

Having in mine examination of my self found my self guilty, I am by attent *consideration* of that sin, whereof I am guilty, both in it self, and as it is mine, to endeavour to affect my heart therewith, so that I may truly *sorrow* for it: and though, it may be, I may truly conclude, that it hath not yet got fully a rooting within me, yet for as much as the first or second commission thereof hath in probability made me more inclined and easie thereto, than I was, when my mind, having been never much bent this way, was thitherwards more inflexible, therefore ought I to study and *consult* how for the future to *secure and confirm* my soul against any relapses or second backslidings: and after such consultation.

conſultation to *reſolve* and engage my ſelf with all poſſible ſtrength againſt it.

One thing more, in caſe of ſins committed, or *wrong done* unto my neighbour, is yet requiſite to the making my repentance ſincere and through; and that is, that I forthwith upon ſight of the ſin, if poſſible, make *reſtitution:* otherwiſe, that I make it as ſoon as I am able; and in caſe I am not likely to be able to make it, that I endeavour, by acknowledgment of mine offence, to ſeek for *reconciliation* unto him, whom I have ſo wronged. The neceſſity hereof may be concluded, 1. From what hath been above ſaid, that repentance cannot be true, except there be an amendment. Now moſt evident it is, that while I ſuffer the wrong done, yet to remain or continue, I am ſtill injurious; and ſo conſequently there is no amendment, and therefore no repentance. And, 2. the words of our Saviour moſt expreſly enforce it. *If thou bring thy gift to the Altar, and there remember that thy Brother hath ought*

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against thee, Leave there thy gift, and first go and be reconciled to thy Brother, then come and offer thy gift. God will accept of no sacrifice or duty whatsoever, at my hands in such a case, till I have reconciled my self, if possible. If any think this not to amount to restitution, 3. Let him read *Levit.* 6.2,3,4,5,6. and *Numb.* 5. 6,7,8. where he shall find, besides the sin-offering to be brought to God, in case of wrong done to others, it was injoined, that the principal should be restored, with an addition of one fifth part thereto. Now if so it be, that I cannot find those, nor the relations (as Children, Widows, Heirs) of those to whom I have been injurious, that I may make restitution, let me give and devote so much to the poor, as would do it, this is *to restore unto God* when I cannot to my brother: let me never lay up any thing wrongfully gotten, or that wherewith recompence should be made for wrong done, *it will eat as doth a Canker.* Besides, I cannot, if by wrong I increase my store, ever with a quiet con-

conſcience, reflect thereon, or reaſonably expect either the Pardon of that my ſin, or Comfort in what I poſſeſs. Part. IV. Chap. 6.

Now the *conſideration* how this *Reſtitution* or *concilement* may be made, and the reſolution to make it, may be beſt done in my Cloſet; and ſuch conſultation and reſolution deſerves a place to be *regiſtred* among my other penitential Devotions, upon the ſame reaſons as they do.

Theſe rules in my repentance if I have obſerved, though I cannot look upon any action of mine, as compleat, yet I may have hope I have not herein been ſlighty, but that God through Chriſt Jeſus will accept it.

SECT. VIII.

Of that Faith which is requiſite in order to pardon of ſin.

BEſides *Repentance*, it is commonly ſaid that God requireth *Faith* of us in order to the pardon of our ſins, and it is moſt certain, if we

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we understand *Faith* as we ought; But it is as certain, that people are ordinarily very much mistaken in the nature of Faith; as it is not unusual for us to be in such things, the names whereof are taken in such different senses as the name of Faith is in Scripture.

See D. *Hammond.* Pract. Catech. Lib. 1. c. 2. 3.

Now Faith, we all of us know, signifies Belief: and therein doth the nature of it lye. Him that we believe in, is God: That which we believe, is his Word. So then, Faith is a full belief or credence of the whole Word of God, and especially of the Gospel; a receiving it, and every part of it, in a way suitable to the matter of it; agreeing to whatever is therein *affirmed*, as being true; believing all the *promises*, that God will never fail on his part, unless we do on ours; setting our selves to fulfil all the *commands*, as believing all that is commanded to be our duty and of indispensable necessity to salvation; being affected with an holy care and fear, upon consideration of all the *threatnings*, as being perswaded God will

will be as good as his word, and punish all impenitent sinners. Faith, I say, is the hearty and sincere embracing and being persuaded of the whole Word, and these its parts and the being affected accordingly: and we must not single out the *promises* and believe them alone, for all *commands* and *threats* are no less the Word of God, than are the promises, and therefore must be as much believed; nor shall any one ever be justified who doth not thus believe the whole. Part. IV. Chap. 6.

To be as express and distinct as I can: A true justifying Faith is no simple act of any one Faculty, but the whole Rational Soul is engaged therein.

First, It *presupposes* in the understanding *Knowledge* both of the Doctrine of the Gospel, and of such Evidences which persuade that Doctrine to be true.

Secondly, It contains, (1.) An *Assent* of the Judgment to the Gospel as True; and that the Covenant of Grace, therein held forth, is the only Method, or Treaty be-

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between God and Man, by which pardon of Sin, and Eternal Life is to be had. (2.) A *Conſent* of the Heart and Will cloſing with this Method, honeſtly engaging in, and endeavouring, the performance of the Conditions on our part required: namely of Evangelical Obedience and Perſeverance. (3.) A *Truſt* in God that he will, accorcording to his gracious Covenant, for Chriſts ſake pardon all our ſins, accept us as Righteous, and keep, guide, and govern us to everlaſting Salvation. This account I think takes in all that can be required in a juſtifying Faith; and which ſoever of theſe branches may be ſpared in any extraordinary caſe, I am ſure neither Knowledge, Aſſent, or Conſent muſt be omitted. Truſt haply may ſeem implied, and in effect contained in the Conſent.

Now if it be asked, whether it be not *faith* in the *free promiſes* of the Goſpel, or a truſting to God through Chriſt, that he will pardon my ſin, which doth chiefly *juſtify* me? I ſay, No: and that the aſſenting

assenting to, and embracing the Doctrine of the Gospel, the receiving every command and threat so deeply into my heart, as that the belief of the one turns forthwith into obedience, and of the other into an holy fear, (which belief makes up the other parts of faith) cannot be conceived to be in its own nature inferior unto that trust, or less either valued or required by God. I do not say that God accepts of any of them, or all of these, for their worth, but of his meer Grace, and according to the Covenant of Grace; (He accepts of them, and of the Person, in whom they are, purely through Christ, through his merits doth he impute this faith to such persons for Righteousness; that is, reckon and accept of this his cordial and impartial receiving his whole Gospel after this sort, as well as if he had performed perfect and unsinning obedience, as he was first bound:) but this I say, (and that upon the evidence already hinted) that justification, or the pardoning of sin, is no more appropriated

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ated to that one act of faith, which we call *Truſt*, than to thoſe other; and that I cannot (if compariſon in this be made) but account thoſe other acts (that *impartial* ſubmitting and *devoting the ſoul to obedience* anſwerable to every command, that true *reſting in the fear of God*) as the more principal, worthy, and, I am ſure, leſs to be ſuſpected acts of faith: For, that of Truſt, preſumption may look ſo like, as to deceive us in; but thoſe other, if durable, admit no counterfeit. Upon the whole I cannot conceive, what we call a juſtifying faith to proceed any otherwiſe than as follows.

Firſt, I do believe the promiſe of pardon of ſin to be true, and God to be faithful, and that without all doubt God will not fail on his part, except I fail on mine. God will not fail to give the promiſed pardon, if I fail not to perfom the condition, upon which he hath promiſed it.

Secondly, I therefore forthwith ſet my ſelf about the condition, or duty required, as I expect a pardon, or promiſed mercy from God:

I

I ſorrow for my ſins; I endeavour amendment of life; I cleave unto God with full purpoſe of impartial Obedience.

Thirdly, Having done ſo, I do not believe that all this is worth any thing in it ſelf, but that it is through the meer grace of God in Chriſt Jeſus, that I muſt be accepted, pardoned, and ſaved. Wherefore I caſt my ſelf on Gods Mercy and Grace, I truſt to God, according to his promiſe (the condition of which I have endeavoured to fulfil) that he will through Chriſt pardon all my ſins, and reckon this my faith to me for righteouſneſs, according to his gracious Covenant, to that purpoſe. To truſt for the pardoning of my ſins upon any other terms is unbelief and preſumption: for it is a believing God will pardon my ſins upon other terms, than he ſaid he would ever pardon ſin, and that is a believing God will be falſe.

But now let the caſe be put, that ſome grievous ſinner, much humbled under the ſenſe of his notorious

Part. IV. Chap. 6.

ous wickedneſs, doth, as beforeſaid, believe the promiſe to be true as it is, ſet himſelf about the fulfilling its condition (ſorrowing, repenting, &c.) believe all that he doth to be in it ſelf worth nothing, but yet Chriſt's merits to be of infinite worth, through which notwithſtanding he dare not truſt for the pardon of his ſins, as remembring them ſo to have abuſed Chriſt, and doubting leſt he hath ſinned beyond the condition, which the promiſe of pardon of ſin thro' Chriſt's merits requires, and in this temper dies, before he can exert any diſtinct act of Truſt, or confidence, as to his own caſe in particular. Put, I ſay, this caſe, ſhall we think this man hath not a true and juſtifying faith? He hath ſurely, and it may be a truer faith, than hath many an one who hath a ſtrong and bold truſt. But yet it is evident he hath not this truſt: For he durſt not, thro' ſenſe of his own unworthineſs, and fear he had ſinned beyond the condition of pardon, animate himſelf thereto. Seeing

ing therefore that it is thus possible a man may in such case be justified without that formed act of faith, I conclude that justification is not appropriate unto it, that is, that a *distinct trusting* in God, that he through Christ will *pardon my personal sin*, is not that act of faith, which chiefly justifies me: and that they are very much mistaken, who take this (by it self) to be the true nature of justifying faith, that they believe God will pardon their sin for Christs sake. It is certainly very comfortable and happy to be able clearly to conceive such Trust; and possibly, most good Christians do: yea, I confess such person as I put the case of, may be understood implicitly and virtually to have such latent Trust, because he sets himself to perform the Conditions of mercy. But forasmuch as it is supposed not distinctly formed, nor can the poor dejected penitent feel he has it, to exclude him from justification for want of such a formed act, when he hath evidently all the other parts of

Part. IV. Chap. 6.

of faith explicitly, is more I think than any ſerious conſiderative man will avow. So then I now ſee the courſe which I am to take, in my *humiliation*, to ſue out the pardon of my ſin: I am to *believe*, that God will not fail on his part, if I do not fail on mine: I am therefore to *repent* of my ſins, as before I have been taught, and *perſiſt in amendment of life*, all the while *truſting* in the grace of God through Chriſt, according to the promiſe of the Goſpel or Covenant of Grace, that, I doing thus, my ſins ſhall not be laid to my charge, as being taken away by the croſs of Chriſt.

SECT.

SECT. IX.

Of Prayer upon ſuch Faſting-days.

THat which will much heighten my affection in this my Repentance, and further compleat all its parts, yet remains, to wit, *Prayer*; which as it muſt on this occaſion and day be more *large* and *particular* than ordinary, ſo I cannot now want matter for it, after ſuch conſideration of my condition, and of the way how I am to ſeek for pardon of ſin, as is ſuppoſed (if the former rules have been obſerved) to have foregone. Particularly, I am to frame my prayers, or at leaſt to alter them, as near as I can, to my condition.

1. *Confeſſing* my ſeveral *ſins*, and that not without thoſe *aggravating circumſtances*, in which I formerly conſidered them.

2. *Repreſenting* before God my *ſorrow*, my *reſolution* of heart againſt them.

3. *Begging* his *grace*, to *aſſiſt* me in

Part. IV. Chap. 6.

in the fulfilling my godly purpoſes, and to *pardon* all my ſins, whether known and confeſſed, or as yet unknown to me.

To theſe heads my Chriſtian diſcretion may add more according to my particular condition. To wit, if any judgment reſt on me or mine, or is feared by reaſon of theſe my ſins, I may implore deliverance from it: If any mercy is expected, or by me aimed at, which I fear my ſins may moſt juſtly hinder or blaſt, I may importune God for the granting it; or otherwiſe apply my ſelf as occaſion ſerves.

Now as to the form or outward manner of my prayer, if I am able to pray otherwiſe, I ſhall not haply on theſe occaſions ſee it always fit or convenient to uſe ſet or compoſed forms: for that, there may be many particular affecting circumſtances of my ſins, which no form will expreſs ſo plainly, as I have need to expreſs them for the moving my ſorrow. If therefore I find my heart ready and ſo compoſed, that I dare venture upon what we call a

conceived

conceived prayer, (which being of mine own frameing, may by the assistance of the Spirit, more perfectly suit with my condition in all, than one composed by another to my hand) having either noted in a Paper before me the substance or matter of my *Confessions*, *Petitions*, and *Thanksgiving*, (which Paper for memories sake, I lay before me when I kneel down to Prayer) or else so considered of, as that it will be ready, I may spend a few thoughts touching the particular expressions, by which I intend to represent this my mind to God, and then proceed. To this purpose these these two practices may be helpful.

1. To read any part of the Word of God, which (being I daily read some of it) I may know to be suitable to my present case. If I find mine heart hard, let me read some affecting working place. (Such I may be presumed to have noted, as I have read in my course.) If I find it tender, let me read such place or places, as may nourish this tenderness, or raise

Part IV. Chap. 6.

raiſe me to an higher pitch of zeal and ardency in theſe duties, which I perform to him. And in like manner, in other caſes.

2. To recal and conſider ſuch fit expreſſions of the particular matters which I am to ſet forth before God, as I may be preſumed to have obſerved and treaſured up in my Memory or Book, in my ordinary courſe of reading.

After ſuch premeditation, with an holy fear, I am to endeavour to pour out my inward conceptions before God, as fitly and as fervently as I can. But I muſt not think that *fervency* lies in *loud ſpeaking*, but in the inward affection of the ſoul: notwithſtanding, if my Cloſet be ſo ſituate, that I may judg I cannot be heard without, I may many times find, that it will conduce, if not to the affecting me more, yet to the keeping my mind more cloſe to my buſineſs, for me to ſpeak in a voice exceeding a private whiſper.

But let me be never ſo able a perſon, and my heart never ſo fixt, to uſe a form ſo far, as where occaſion ſhall

ſhall ſerve to leave it a while, (to wit where I would confeſs or ask more particularly) may keep my prayers from being looſe, imperfect, broken and diſorderly, and conſequently make my devotions riper. Now ſuch an one is this which follows.

O Thou Great, Holy, and Fearful God, unto whom all things are naked and open; and before whom, as being of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, nothing that is unrighteous ſhall ſtand. I even bluſh and dread to appear before thee: for in me there is nothing but iniquity that thou canſt behold. Iniquity indeed is too clean a word: I am nothing but filth. I have ſinned againſt Heaven and before thee, and am ſo far unworthy of being called thy ſon, that I am not fit to be called thy ſervant: Invocation. General confeſſion of grievous guilt.

Part. IV. Chap. 6.

but deſerve rather as a Rebel, as a faithleſs and treacherous wretch againſt thy Majeſty, to be deſtroyed of the Deſtroyer, to have all thy wrath and plagues to meet in me, and to be made unto the world an example of thy ſeverity and revenging juſtice, that by me men might learn, no more to preſume and backſlide.

Allegation of promiſes, to affect or melt the heart more kindly.

But there is mercy with thee, O Lord, that thou mayſt be feared and ſought unto; Nor haſt thou, as thou haſt proteſted, any pleaſure in the death of ſinners; but art ſo deſirous, that they might return and be healed, that thou haſt not ſpared thy very only begotten Son, but haſt given him to ſeek, and, by death it ſelf, to ſave the loſt Sons of men; promiſing, that of all thoſe, who through him come home unto thee, thou wilt

wilt by no means caſt off any. I come, O Lord, at leaſt I have here ſet my ſelf in the way to come; and I do with my ſoul bewail my departures: Now let not my Lord be angry, and I will confeſs,

Part IV. Chap. 6.

Particular confeſſion of habitual ſins.

I have, O God, a moſt corrupt nature and heart, full of impurities and abominable things, as a Cage of unclean Birds. She was innocent in compariſon of me, out of whom came but ſeven Devils. I may moſt truly ſtyle my ſelf *Legion*: ſuch ſwarms of luſts do poſſeſs me! The luſts of the fleſh († Intemperance, Idleneſs, Uncleanneſs, &c.) the luſts of the eyes († Covetouſneſs, Envy, &c.) the Pride of life († Conceitedneſs of my ſelf, Ambition and proud

Whereſoever in this Prayer the mark † is found, the Reader muſt not forget to conſider particularly touching thoſe expreſſions, whether they fit his condition.

Part. IV. Chap. 6.

Wrath &c. are things familiar to me, rooted and grounded in my heart: And that truly, Lord, not so much by nature, as by continued custom and wicked practice. I have my self made my soul more depraved, than ever it was by corrupt nature. That I am dull and heartless in the performance of all holy duties; that I am vigorous and active in the serving my lusts and pleasures, and the fulfilling the desires of my flesh and mind; that I am vain, heedless, and commonly void of thy fear in all my ways. I owe very much unto my own vicious Conversation; unto my giving my self up to walk in my own ways; unto my chooſing vanity, and addicting my self thereto; one while, unto my total neglect, at other times, slighty discharge of thy worship. Impos-

possible in a manner it is, that any one who lives as I have done, should have a better heart than I have. Part IV. Chap. 6.

And at this rate, O Lord, have I ever lived. My childhood, the more innocent part of my life, was a state of necessary ignorance of thee: yet even herein, how soon did the accursed fruits of inborn lusts begin to shew themselves! My youth, what was it, but a vain and brutish, a mad and sensual age! As to that small notice, which therein I had of thy will and nature, how little credit did I give unto it, and how ineffectual was it upon me, either to the quickening me to my duty, or restraining me from any wickedness! But as to my riper years, O Lord, I know not what to say: I should in truth Of actual sin. In childhood. Youth. Ripe age.

Part IV. Chap. 6.

ſit down aſtoniſh'd before thee, but that I want a due ſenſe of my ſinfulneſs. Mine iniquities are gone over my head: That they are greater than I can bear, is little; they are greater than I can comprehend or number. Nay if I ſhould let paſs my ſins of ignorance, of infirmity, of heedleſneſs and inadvertency, (by which notwithſtanding I ſeriouſly acknowledg my ſelf, times without number, to have diſhonoured and provoked thee:) If I ſhould inſiſt only upon my knowing, preſumptuous, and wilful ſins, even theſe O Lord, it were impoſſible for me to reckon up. For beſides that vaſt number of them, which I cannot call to mind (all which notwithſtanding are upon record before thee) what a black and tedious Catalogue of them have I here open

open (or, which I can ſpread) before thee! How many wilful neglects, yea, even contempts of my duty! How many reſolute perpetrations of horrid crimes! Such which I † now am aſhamed even to think of, yet did not then bluſh to commit; Sins! the heinouſneſs whereof being conſidered, if I could do nothing elſe but mourn over them all my days, though I ſhould weep, as my Saviour ſweat, in clots of blood, under unknown anguiſh and agonies, I could not but account my ſelf impenitent. Nay, had I only that one ſin of [**] ſo often by me repeated to bewail, what ſorrow could ſuffice for its due lamentation?

† If need require, *non* may in this, and ſuch other places, be exchanged with *often* or *ſometimes*.

But if I add hereunto my [**] my [**] &c. what reaſon

Here are to be mentioned thy chiefeſt and moſt frequent ſin or ſins.

Part IV. Chap. 6.

ſon have I, were my faſts, confeſſions, prayers, and tears a thouſand fold to what they are or can be, to ſit down and lament my notorious impenitence!

Actual ſins aggravated.

And beſides this weight of guilt, which the hainous nature of my ſins themſelves loads me with, what a ſad additional preſſure do their diſmal aggravations bring? What circumſtance almoſt can there be that makes ſin grievous, which I may not find in moſt of mine? It is but an ordinary aggravation of my ſins, that they have been committed againſt knowledge, that I have held thy truth in unrighteouſneſs, and, being convinced of my duty, have both neglected it, and done contrary unto it:

Againſt Conſcience.

† The very inſtant dictates of conſcience, proteſting againſt the

the ſins which I have been about to commit; the ſmitings of mine own heart, not only after and before, but amidſt the very commiſſion of them, have not reſtrained my head-ſtrong will. Part IV. Chap. 6.

† Nay, O Lord, hath not the voice of the Spirit joyned with the voice of my Conſcience, and the united perſwaſions of both ſtriven with me, but all in vain? Have I not known that if I would reſiſt, through thy grace I ſhould overcome? And might I not through the ſame grace, have reſiſted if I would? † Have not I at the very ſame time thought of thy wrath and eternal flames belonging to thoſe who do ſuch things? and yet this in vain too. Againſt the ſtrivings of the Spirit.

And beſides the vow of my Baptiſm, which I have owned and acknowledged my ſelf to Againſt Vows.

Part IV. Chap. 6.

ſtand bound by, Ah! Lord, have I not made many a particular vow againſt thoſe very ſins, which after, as a Dog to his vomit, I have returned to; And † thoſe vows brought to thy Table, and ſealed in the Blood of thy Son? Have not I taſted thy mercies, encourageing mine obedience, and on the contrary, ſometimes wrung out almoſt the dregs of thy wrath in puniſhment of my backſlidings.

At the Lord's Table.

Againſt Mercies and Judgments,

Againſt hindrances.

Further, haſt not thou many a time hindred me in my proſecution of theſe ſins, and by ſome interpoſing providence, dulled the temptation, which I lay under towards them? † When yet I have proved ſo far a Devil to my ſelf, as to retrieve the temptation, and over-bearing the voice of my conſcience, the reſiſtance of thy Spirit,

Spirit, breaking through all engagements to obedience, which either thou or my self have laid upon me, yea, and the very hindrances and lets, which have been put in my way against those sins, I have returned to the attempts and practices of them! Ah Lord! What can such a sinner be fit for, but destruction? And yet after this sort, how long have I lived sinning! And how have I hardened my heart against all those means, which thou hast used for my betterment! Besides, How many of these my sins have been committed openly and in the sight of the Sun, to the dishonour of thee, and to the scandal of others, who beholding my practices, have blasphemed, at least been provoked to blaspheme, and speak evil of Christianity!

Continuance in sin.

Openness of sin.

All

Part IV. Chap. 6.

Confession of later sins.

All this, O Lord, is but my old wickedneſs: I have later [and † therefore, if poſſible, ſome of them more grievous] ſins to confeſs unto thee. It is but [ſuch or ſuch a time or day! that I [**] Ah how can I lift up my face or look towards thee, my ſo oft offenden God!

Here mention Later falls.

Confeſſion of my other mens ſins.

And yet, notwithſtanding all this, I have not yet done, O Lord. For beſides theſe ſins of mine own, what a multitude of the ſins of other men do I ſtand acceſſary unto and guilty of! How many, for ought I know, have I undone by my example! What a multitude is there, whoſe profaneneſs and unbelief (being occaſioned by the ſcandal againſt Religion, which my looſneſs hath poſſeſt them with) I am to anſwer for! † Some there

there are, whom I have more directly and neerly corrupted. And how many more may they have corrupted, who haply had not been in that caſe corrupt themſelves, had not I propagated ſuch ſins to them! Ah! wretched man that I am, who have not been ſo far innocent as to be wicked alone, and deſtroy no more than my ſelf. Chap. 6. Part. IV.

And now, O Lord, after I have confeſſed thus much, notwithſtanding all which I have confeſſed, and much more which I am not able to expreſs, nor ſo much as to recollect or view, what an hard, unbroken, and ſtupid heart have I! The truth is, the multitude and grievouſneſs of my ſins is ſuch, as is enough to make me impenitent and deſperate upon the reflection on them. † I may well doubt Confeſſion of impenitence.

Part IV. Chap 6.

doubt, whether it be poſſible, that ſuch a backſliding wretch as my ſelf ſhould ever be renewed again unto repentance, or thereby reſtored.

Addreſs of affiance, or caſting the ſoul on God for mercy.

But foraſmuch as I underſtand, that to turn thus deſperate, and to neglect repentance & amendment of life, would be worſe than all the wickedneſs, which I have hitherto wrought, I am here proſtrate before thee to bewail my ſelf, and with ſorrow and grief of heart for my former ways do I here caſt my ſelf upon thee. If thou wilt have mercy, thou canſt ſtill ſave me: If thou wilt not, Lord, I periſh. But doeſt thou uſe to ſuffer thoſe to periſh, who thus with ſuch repentance as they can, ſubmit and humble themſelves at thy footſtool, crying unto thee for help? Far be it from thee, thou Father of Mercies! Not-

Notwithstanding, in as much as I, being much worse than ordinary sinners, do more justly deserve to find no place for repentance, and have therefore more reason to fear how thou mayst deal with me, deal with me as thou wilt, † through thy grace I will sin no more; no more knowingly and presumptuously, as I have done. And to that end I have here in thy presence this day considered my ways: † I have endeavoured to find out those wiles and methods, by which the Devil and mine own lusts have ensnared me in such grievous sins. † I have resolved upon impartial diligence as well in my endeavours against these particular evils as against all other, and in performing unto thee hearty and entire obedience. These Resolutions I here humbly present

Resolution against sin represented to God.

Part. IV. Chap. 6.

Petition. For acceptance.

ſent before thee, ſacredly engaging my ſelf to do my utmoſt to keep them, and beſeeching thee by thy grace to engage my heart more firmly to them. And, Lord, let not any dulneſs or want of that affection, with which I ought to have confeſſed my ſins, to have bewailed my guilt, and to have paſſed theſe reſolutions, hinder, that this my ſerious humiliation of my ſelf ſhould not be accepted before thee. Such contrition, as thou haſt enabled me to, I have endeavoured, ſorrowing that I am not more deeply humbled; ſuch, which is wanting, do thou beſtow; For it is no leſs thy property to beſtow than accept the contrite heart: The broken ſpirit is, O Lord, from thee. When thou of old commandedſt water out of the flinty

For more brokenneſs of heart.

ty Rock, it forthwith yielded obedient ſtreams: nor can my heart (dry and hard as it is) but diſſolve into holy tears, if thou wilt bid it melt: Give forth then the word, O God; Speak, thy ſervant is here ready to hear. Turn thou me and I ſhall be turned. Send out thy good Spirit: let it enlighten the eyes of my mind, in the knowledg both of my ſelf and thee: let it ſavingly perſwade me of the truth of all that thou haſt ſpoken, and eſpecially, of the defiling, curſed, and damning nature of ſin, of the ſufficiency and efficacy of the merits of Chriſt Jeſus, unto all thoſe, who by a right faith apply themſelves to thee through him. (I do, O Lord, believe, help my unbelief.) And grant that this ſight and perſwaſion both of my ſin and Savi-

For thorough and particular converſion.

Part. IV. Chap. 6.

Saviour may affect mine heart, ſo that I may ſorrow after a godly ſort: and that ſorrow may bring forth in me thoſe wholſom fruits (which after all my endeavours of Repentance I cannot but lament to be much wanting in me, to wit) *carefulneſs againſt ſin, vehement deſire and zeal of holineſs, indignation and an holy revenge againſt my ſelf*; by all which I may for the future *clear* my ſelf, and ever approve mine heart honeſt, upright, and ſincere before thee.

For perſeverance.

Suffer not this my righteouſneſs to be only, as a morning cloud or early dew, ſoon paſſing away, but let thy grace always dwelling in me keep open in my ſoul an ever-flowing Fountain of ſuch penitence, that I may go on thus mourning to mourn over my ſins

Part IV. Chap. 6. For Justification.

ſins, and perfecting holineſs in thy fear; accounting all little enough, if ſo be I may but in the end obtain mercy. And this my penitent return (at leaſt hearty endeavour of ſuch return) accompanied with perſevering ſtudy of impartial obedience to thee, do thou, however moſt unworthy in it ſelf, through the perfect merits of thy Son, accept, waſhing away all my ſins (both the iniquities of my youth and tranſgreſſions of my riper years, as well known as unknown) eſpecially my (**) in his blood; and reckoning, according to thy gracious Covenant, this my faith (which by ſuch works as theſe ſhall diſcover it ſelf to be alive and true) unto me for righteouſneſs. And, if thy infinite Wiſdom ſhall ſee it to be good for

Here mention thy chiefeſt ſin or ſins.

For aſſurance.

Part IV. Chap. 6.

for me; do thou grant me this further happineſs, that I thus living in thy fear, may be ever filled with peace and joy; through a comfortable aſſurance of thy favour, and hopes of eternal Glory.

For outward comforts.

As to all my outward affairs, by thy good providence be thou pleaſed ſo to over-rule all events, that whatſoever befalls me may work together to me for good. My ſins indeed, O Lord, deſerve quite contrary; even the ſevereſt inflictions of thy wrath and fiery diſpleaſure. And I do moſt ſeriouſly acknowledg that in all the judgments, which thou haſt at any time laid upon me, thou haſt uſed much mercy. All the pains, which my body hath felt; all the loſſes, which have impaired my eſtate; all the ſlanders, which have blaſted my name

Confeſſion as to judgment.

name (particularly * *) I embrace as infinitely leſs than my deſerts. That † I am in any ſtraits [* *] that I ſuffer otherwiſe (in my body, relations, &c. * *) were all a thouſand fold to what it is, I ſhould confeſs it to be moſt juſt. Were I to enjoy no more good than I do deſerve, I ſhould have juſt nothing. Righteous therefore art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee. Yet if thou wilt be intreated by thy repenting ſervant, to † withdraw (* or withhold) thy hand; to remove the puniſhment I feel (or not to inflict the puniſhments which I fear) but through the blood of Chriſt to deliver me from thy preſent wrath, as well as from the wrath to come, thy

Here mention any particular affliction.

Deprecation of them.

* *Theſe and ſuch like expreſſions are to be uſed according to perſons particular conditions.*

Part IV. Chap. 6.

thy ſervant ſhall ever bleſs and praiſe thee, and be able to ſerve thee with more chearful diligence. However, Lord, thy Will be done, bring me ſurely to thy ſelf, let it be by what means thou wilt: Pleaſe thy ſelf, thy ſervant will endeavour to be ſatisfied: Deny me what things thou wilt, only deny me not *Grace*, *Pardon*, *and thy Self*; I can ask nothing greater, and, Bleſſed be thy Name, it is thy will that I ſhould be content with nothing leſs.

Interceſſion.

And not only upon me, O Lord, but upon all men do thou have mercy, according to the gracious pleaſure of thine own moſt holy Will. Eſpecially upon the Univerſal Church; enlarge thou its bounds; provide for its ſafety and purity, delivering any part of it, which is

is in danger; and reforming whatsoever of it is corrupted. Do thou with all suitable mercies bless this particular Church: Forgive the publick sins (**): Heal the publick Calamities (**). Preserve and every way be gracious unto the King's Majesty, his Queen, and all the Royal Family. Let all thy Priests be cloathed with Righteousness, and let thy work prosper in their hands: and especially within this Parish, of which I am apart, let the knowledge and fear of thee increase. Visit all my Kindred, Relations, and Acquaintances (**) with such blessings as they need. Reward a thousand fold all who have shewn any kindness to

* *Here mention such sins or calamities.*

Part. IV. Chap. 6.

to thy ſervant; eſpecially (**) Forgive and have mercy upon all mine Enemies, and let not one of them ever fare the worſe for any wrong done to me. Deliver in thine own good time thy righteous ones out of all their afflictions, and in the mean time ſupport them, ſanctifying all unto them. (**) Shew thy ſelf every way alſufficient unto all thine.

In all theſe vacancies thus marked (**) make ſuch particular mention as thy condition ſhall require, or prudence ſuggeſt.

Thankſgiving.

Finally, O Lord, I bleſs and praiſe thy glorious grace, for all thoſe bleſſings which I enjoy, and thoſe particular deliverances, whether ancient or later, which thou haſt vouchſafed me. (**) Above all, for thy redeeming, not only me, but the whole humane nature, by the precious blood of

of thy well-beloved Son; for that knowledge which I have of thee in him my Saviour Christ Jesus; for any sight and sense of my sin, which through thy Grace I have; for any hopes of finding mercy in that great day.

Here bless God for any inward joy, enlargments, &c.

(**) I, O Lord, am far less than the least of these thy mercies. It is thy goodness, thy goodness alone, which is the fountain whence they came: And mayst thou from me, and from Heaven and Earth, ever receive the glory of that thy goodness. May I ever serve thee in newness of life and answerable walking.

Concl. sorry Petitions.

And do thou forgive not only my former ingratitude, but my present want of thankfulness, together with all the

Part. IV. Chap. 6.

ſins of theſe my holy things, waſhing me, and my very tears, prayers, and penitence, in the blood of my Saviour Chriſt Jeſus, in whoſe words thy ſervant will ſpeak yet once more,

Our Father, &c.

It is not to be ſuppoſed, that this Prayer without any alteration will ſuit with the condition of every Reader: God forbid, all ſhould have ſinned at that rate, to come up to which this Prayer was framed. The prudent Chriſtian therefore is to add, leave out, alter what he ſees good; or, if able himſelf, to do better, and lay aſide all. Nothing is here obtruded on any, only directions and help intended to ſome who need them.

SECT.

SECT. X.

Of Offerings to God for the use of the poor; departure out of the Closet, and behaviour afterwards.

MY Prayers being thus finished, I should not hastily run out, but pause a while and remember, that there is one work remaining, which is not to be neglected, if I have wherewithal to do it, being it is required by God in an acceptable Fast: and that is, to add something every Fast, though it be the less, to what I have formerly laid aside for the poor; or if there be no such stock already made by me, much more then to design and devote somewhat to that purpose. *This is the fast I have chosen, to deal thy bread unto the hungry*, &c. It being thus given, I may deal it when I shall see occasion. Now as to the particular manner of this practice, directions have been above given, which especially upon these days it will be expedient to observe. *Isa.* 58. 6. 7.

Part. IV. Chap. 6.

And this being done, let me with chearfulneſs depart my Cloſet; let not my behaviour be without innocent alacrity: And let it be my ſpecial care, ſo to order all my carriage on theſe my Faſts, that they may not, if poſſible, be taken notice of by any but my ſelf and God; as being mindful of that command of my Saviour's, *Anoint thy head, and*
Mat. 6. 17. *waſh thy Face, that thou appear not unto men to faſt*, that is, behave thy ſelf with ſuch outward chearfulneſs (of which, anointing the head and waſhing the face were Arguments) that no man ordinarily beholding thee, would take the day he ſees thee ſo, to be one of thy Faſt or Mourning days.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of great and more extraordinary Fasts, and the work of them.

BEsides these my Fasts which come in course, at least once a week, several occasions may befal me, which may require an extraordinary Fast. Such is any *great evil* hanging over *mine head*, or *my Friends*, or the *Nations*, any considerable *change of my way of living*, or the like: but especially, when I am to *receive the Holy Communion.*

My work upon such occasions will be the same, as is formerly directed to: only my Christian discretion will order it with a particular respect to that my great occasion which calls me to fast: which occasion I am especially to meditate upon (and that not without a regard had to my Sins: if there be any evil

Part. IV. Chap. 6.

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Part. IV. Chap. 7.

which I deprecate, to consider how my sins have been the causes of it; if any good, for which I supplicate, how again my sins may blast that) and accordingly to commend it to God in my prayers: in which case also the form of prayer delivered in the foregoing Chapter will not be useless.

Particularly; as to that which will most frequently come in practice, my humiliations preparatory for the Lord's Supper. In these, besides that examination of my self, which in ordinary course I make, I am to look over mine *Accomptal*, to see every week since my last communicating, what my carriage hath been, how I have amended, especially in those particulars, in which I had formerly taken notice of my miscarriages, and vowed reformation. All my revolts and backslidings are to be attentively viewed in themselves and in their aggravations; and repentance, as before taught, to be, with all diligence and fervour that I can, exercised. But in case I am a new communicant, and now making

ing my first addresses unto the Lord's Table, or in case I have formerly been there, but not with so due preparation as I now would make, although the former rules of the practice of humiliation and repentance contain the chief part of my duty, yet directions more particular are provided. Part. IV. Chap. 7.

Yea, and besides these times of special exigence, ought I to be often surveying and looking over mine Accomptal. In mine ordinary daily devotions, or in my devotions upon my fast-days I shall find both need and opportunity for it. And if Scholars find it necessary to peruse their own Collections or Common-place books; if Shopkeepers review often their books, to the end they may, by seeing what they have formerly done know how to order their future proceedings in their business, so as not to go backward, or be diligent to no purpose, how much more care ought I to take in the concernments of my soul, and for that Jewel which if I lose, although I should gain the whole world, I am irreparably undone.

Part. IV. Chap. 8.

CHAP. VIII.

The Concluſion.

THE Author of this ſmall piece, Chriſtian Reader, is very ſure, that be thou who thou wilt, thou canſt not but approve for the main that practice, which is here commended to thee: although there ſhould be ſome particulars (as to the obſervation of Holy days or the like) which may not ſuit with the humour of every mans devotion. Confident he is, he ſaith, that the daily practice of *Reading*, *Meditation*, *Self-examination*, *Prayer*, *the* orderly and due practice of *Humiliation*, *Mortification*, and the reſt of thoſe Subſtantials, which are here directed to, cannot be gainſaid. It might have

have been better taught, but he hath done it as well, and as plainly as he could. Being therefore that thou can'ſt not but ſay, he is a good man who thus lives, and wiſh that thou ever hadſt lived ſo, he chargeth it again upon thy conſcience, thus to live: elſe art thou ſelf-condemned, and guilty of known negligence and omiſſion. Thou doſt not endeavour what, notwithſtanding thy conſcience cannot but approve. He is confident further, that if thou didſt but feel that peace, quiet, joy, and happineſs, which ſuch practice leaves behind it, if thou haſt any ſenſe what it is to have a clear Conſcience, and therefore free and chearful acceſs to God, and an humble fearleſneſs of the face of men, which without ſome ſuch practice as this thou canſt never

have, thou needeſt no other argument to quicken thee to this practice. Find a greater happineſs on earth, than for a man to be at peace with, and like himſelf, and get that peace by any other courſe, than ſuch exerciſe of Godlineſs, ſuch circumſpection over all thy ways, as hath been here taught, and thou ſhalt have leave to neglect all: but if thou canſt not, then think thy ſelf bound to theſe practices. For directions in the making uſe of the Book, thou haſt them in the *Admonition to the Reader*, in the beginning of the Book, whither return and read the whole over again: It will be no whit worſe the ſecond time read: And ſo God bleſs it and thee.

FINIS.

PERSWASIVES
WITH
DIRECTIONS
To the frequent and Holy uſe
OF THE
LORD'S SUPPER.
By way of Appendix to the
Method of Private Devotion.

By the ſame Author.

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2 Cor. 3. 4.

Having renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, we walk not in craftineſs, nor handle the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of the truth commend our ſelves to every mans Conſcience in the ſight of God.

London, Printed for *T. Sawbridge* in *Little Britain*, *R. Bentley* in *Covent-Garden*, and *G. Wells* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, 1684.

PERSWASIVES WITH DIRECTIONS To the frequent and Holy uſe OF THE Lords Supper.

By way of an Appendix to the Method of Private Devotion.

CHAP. I.

A Propoſition of the particular Matters to be treated of in this Diſcourſe.

PRivate Devotion was never deſigned to take us off from, but prepare us for the publick worſhip of God. Wherefore, as in our private Method conſideration hath

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been had, and accompt endeavoured, touching thoſe ſecret duties in the Cloſet, which publick Prayer, hearing the Word, and ſanctifying the Lord's day require of us in order to their due performance, ſo is it but juſtice now that we conſider what particular work in the Cloſet the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper will find our devotion. And foraſmuch, as upon the very firſt thoughts of this moſt Divine and Heavenly Ordinance, if reflecting withal on common practice, we cannot but obſerve a double fault very rife in this our *Iſrael*, *Neglect* on the one ſide, ſome coming not at all or very ſeldom, and of *Temerity* on the other, in them who come to it (and perhaps often) but conſider not much either how or why they come; it ought to be our care to avoid both theſe rocks, and as commanded both to *do it often*, and with due *remembrance* of him whoſe death we thereby *ſhew forth till he come*.

CHAP.

Chap. 2.

CHAP. II.

Considerations to move to frequenting the Lords Supper.

TO move me to be a frequent gueſt at the Lord's Table; let me duly conſider the *Obligations* which lye upon me thereunto: Some *my Saviour*, ſome *the Church*, ſome *my very own condition* and *wants* lay upon me.

SECT. I.

Obligations from Chriſt.

FIrſt, My Saviour's very inſtituting a means by which I might be ſo intimately united, and as it were mixt with him, obliges me not only in point of *Ingenuity* but *Gratitude*. For, let me lay it to heart, May this earthen body of mine, polluted as it is with a world of ſins, be yet made the temple and receptacle of my glorious Lord,

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nay, in a ſort have his body incorporated with it, and is it poſſible I can be ſo dull as not to move with all might and haſt to the means of ſuch advancement? Such Brutiſhneſs and baſeneſs of ſpirit is not ſurely incident into a reaſonable creature, if duly conſiderative. But then let me remember, My Lord's body was pierc'd, and torn, and given to death for me; his blood ſpilt for the remiſſion of my ſins, and will not this endear the means of its participation to me? Is there an expedient contrived and method appointed by my very crucified Saviour himſelf, by which I may come and take my ſhare of that very body which hung on the Croſs for me, of that blood, by which I believe and hope for the remiſſion of my ſins; and can I be ſo irreligiouſly ungrateful as not to come at it? Are neglects the only fit retribution to repay unto my crucified and bleeding Lord, bleeding for me too, offering me ſtill his blood? I cannot ſure turn my back.

Further,

Further, A ſecond obligation my Saviour laid upon me, by that ſtrange *zeal of love* towards me and the humane nature, with which he came to the *inſtitution* of this Sacrament. When he ſpeaks of his own paſſion, before he entred upon it, *I have a Baptiſm*, ſaith he, *to be baptized with, and how am I ſtraitned till it be accompliſhed?* He ſeems even to have longed to ſuffer for us, to have thought the time tedious till he had been betray'd, and ſcoff't, and ſcourged, and tortured, and had bled for us (for a mixture of *love* and of *deſire* of accompliſhing his work, conflicting with natural dread of the foreſeen cup, muſt that his being *ſtraitned* ſpeak) and all this at the beginning of that very Supper, after which he inſtituted this Sacrament. *With deſire* (the word is uſed for Luſt) have I deſired *to eat this Paſſeover with you before I ſuffer.* As if he had ſaid, within theſe few hours I ſhall be led away to ſuffer for you, which (ſuch is my love to you) I long for. But before that, I have

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Luke 12. 50.

Luke 22. 15.

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another no leſs paſſionate an appetite to ſatisfie, and that is of inſtituting of that Sacrament by which you, and all that ſhall believe in my Name to the end of the world, may be made partakers of that Body and Blood, which I am about to give for you and them. Let me lay then this to heart: can I now add *unnaturalneſs* to my *diſingenuity* and *ingratitude*, and turn my back on my dying Saviour, when he is now greedy and moſt paſſionately deſirous, I might take my part of that Body and Blood which was given for my redemption?

If deſires move not, yet ſurely *commands* may, for theſe are moſt directly obligatory.

Thirdly then, If my dying Saviour did not *command* me this, and command it too in *remembrance* of his death and paſſion, and *to ſhew forth his death* till he come, the neglect might poſſibly ſeem more tolerable. But now, ſince to the importunity of the Sacrament's own nature, and our Lord's moſt paſſio-

paſſionate deſires to have it inſtituted, he hath added his commands alſo, three times recorded by the Evangeliſts, and once by St. *Paul*, that it might not be deemed an unneceſſary matter, & which could be ſpared, ſhall I to my diſingenuous and unnatural ingratitude, add direct diſobedience and rebellion? Shall I ſtand out againſt all thoſe obligations which heaven can lay upon me? Will I neither be won by ſuch inſtitutions, which even ingenuity and natural ambition would prompt me to embrace, nor moved by the moſt paſſionate entreaties of a dying Saviour, nor awed by peremptory commands to taſt and take what is ſo provided? What can I, in caſe I ſtill ſtand out, think of my ſelf? What can I ſay in mine own excuſe? Or what can I look for, but to be denied my portion in that blood, the participation of which, againſt ſuch obligations from my Saviour I have thus neglected?

SECT.

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SECT. II.

Obligations from the Church.

BEſides this, the Church hath laid obligations upon me hereto, both by its *Practice*, *Command and Diſcipline*.

As to the *Practice* of the Church, it will not be eaſie to pitch upon any publick degeneracy in the preſent Church, which the practice of the Primitive Church doth more upbraid us of, than infrequent and ſeldom communicating. In all likelihood immediately after our Lord's Aſcenſion, and the Deſcenſion of the Holy Ghoſt, the Apoſtles, and thoſe early Proſelytes of Chriſtianity daily received the Lord's Supper: which though a moſt learned perſon, who more than once affirmed it moſt probable, (from *Acts* 2.) afterwards ſeems to doubt, yet I doubt leſs of, foraſmuch as St. *Auſtin* acquaints us it was uſual even in his days. However that none of their ſolemn Aſſemblies in the

Epiſt. 118. ad Januar.

the ancient Church were without a Communion, is moſt certain from all antiquity: and the Scripture it ſelf teſtifies expreſly as to the Lord's day: The reſtauration of which pious courſe, that our Church at the Reformation deſigned, is from hence moſt evident, that there is no Lord's day nor Feſtival throughout the year, which hath not a peculiar Communion Service appointed for it. Chap. 2. Acts 20. 7.

If the practice of the Primitive and purer Church move us not, I confeſs there is reaſon to fear the *injunctions* of our particular Church will but little avail. However, he who bid us account that brother as *an Heathen* and *Publican* who refuſed to hear the Church, thought ſure that her commands had no ſmall obligation on her children. And the Apoſtle that commanded *us to obey thoſe that rule over us, and ſubmit our ſelves to them*, in as much as *they watch for our ſouls*; and withal added, that it is *unprofitable for us*, that by reaſon of our untractableneſs they ſhould be able only Matth. 18. 17. Heb. 13. 17.

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only with *grief* to give *account* to heaven of us, conceived it fit we ſhould be obedient to ſuch wholeſome Laws, as thoſe our Rulers ſhould give unto us.

Now the ſubſtance of the Commands of our Church in this caſe we find in the Rubrick at the end of the Communion, that in all Pariſhes every Pariſhioner communicate, *at leaſt thrice a year*. This is the leaſt our Church will tolerate, not but that it is evident ſhe ſhould have her Children more frequently to communicate, as appears from that expreſſion *at the leaſt thrice*; but conſidering the common backwardneſs of people, ſhe commanded what ſhe might have hopes to obtain, the *leaſt* which poſſibly (the generality of mens occaſions being all conſidered) ſhe could judg in any ſort tolerable, and that was *thrice* a year. Wherefore in Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, it is enjoyned (as in the precedent part of the ſame Rubrick) that all the Miniſters thereof communicate (except

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in caſe of reaſonable impediments, of which negligence undoubtedly is none) *every Lords day at leaſt*; that expreſſion intimating (as well as another [*viz. on Holidays if there be no Communion*] a little before) that it was fit and requiſite that commonly on days of Solemn Aſſemblies, as are Lords days and Holidays, there ſhould be a Communion. Chap. 2.

Of this requiring of her Miniſters (where in convenient number to make up a Communion) that they ſhould thus often communicate, whereas the people ſeem left at greater liberty, I ſuppoſe the reaſon is, becauſe ſhe preſumes and requires them to be of ſtricter lives and ſanctity than the common ſort. So that it will from hence follow that our Church judgeth it requiſite to all perſons, who would live ſtrictly and more devote to God, than the common ſort, who too much incumber themſelves in the world, frequently, if not weekly, to communicate.

As

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As to *Diſcipline*, it hath been moſt reaſonably adjudged, that the ſevere ſentence of *Excommunication* is moſt juſtly due to ſuch who neglect the participation of the Lords Supper. The *Canon* enjoyneth the Miniſter and Church-warden to ſignifie ſuch: The Church-warden is bound upon his oath, as the Miniſter by the fidelity he owes to the Church, to make preſentment of ſuch. And amongſt thoſe particular caſes for which by Statute, the Writ *to take the Excommunicate perſon* lies, not receiving the Communion is one expreſly. Which ſevere Diſcipline none can juſtly blame, who conſiders, that ſuch perſons do in a manner Excommunicate themſelves, or will grant, that the Church and the Magiſtrate are bound not to ſee the Commands of Chriſt, and Ordinances of the Goſpel neglected, but to conſtrain ſuch, who have ſubjected themſelves to the Goſpel, to obedience to it, where they will not voluntarily perform it. And it ſeems reaſonably demandable, why

a man ſhould be puniſhed for *ſwearing*, for *prophaning the Lords day*, or the like crimes (as thoſe who blame the ſeverity of this Law judge fit) if he may not be puniſhed for *groſs neglect* of the Lords Supper; ſeeing both equally offend againſt Divine commands. I cannot then but in reaſon think my ſelf bound frequently to communicate by the obligations which the primitive and preſent Church lay upon me. Chap. 2.

SECT. III.

Of obligations from within.

LAſtly, doth not my own condition and wants ſtrongly importune and oblige me to it?

1. Have I ſo faithfully kept the covenant of my Baptiſm, and thoſe latter vows and engagements which I have made to God, that I do not need to renew them? Alas! have I been faithful to any one of them? Now what ſo proper or firm renovation of them as by this ſecond Sacra-

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Sacrament? If I have broken my covenant, I have certainly forfeited the benefits I covenanted for Grace, pardon of my ſins, and life eternal. And how can I expect theſe, if when God daily offers to receive me again into Covenant (as he doth by this Sacrament) I neglect to come in, and enter covenant. But poſſibly that I think I can do, by ſetting down private reſolutions in my Cloſet, without coming in publick to the Lords Table: Let me enquire then further:

2. Are all my corruptions ſo mortified, and graces ſo ſtrong that ſingle vows will hold me? Do not I daily find a double, yea treble and manifold cord (all the methods which I can invent or uſe to confirm my reſolutions) to be little enough, and (God knows) many times too little? And muſt I not confeſs this Sacrament inſtituted by Chriſt as the primary and moſt Soveraign means of ſtrengthening me? Nay, do not I find in my own experience, poſſibly, that of all the vows that ever I made in my

my life, I have been moſt cautious of thoſe which I ſealed in the blood of my Saviour? Though poſſibly (wretch that I am!) I have broken ſome of them, yet I broke them moſt difficultly. With what conſcience then, can I abſent my ſelf from, and neglect this Sacrament? Am I afraid of making my vows too ſtrong? But perhaps, I am jealous of my ſelf, that I ſhall break even theſe vows thus renewed, and thus ſealed, and therefore fear by new communicating I ſhall only aggravate my ſucceeding falls. Let me conſider this caſe: Chap. 2.

Is my guilt like to be any whit the leſs, becauſe I do not ſtrive againſt ſin as much as I may, and uſe againſt it all means I have? As in my preſent ſtate, I deſpond in a manner of my own ſtanding: of the two it is more likely, I ſhall be able to overcome when I ſtruggle to the laſt effort, & leave no means unattempted, by which I may ſtrengthen my ſelf and get above mine enemies, than when I neglect the means I have to gain ſtrength. Certainly

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ly if I endeavour my utmoſt againſt known and deliberate ſins, God will not charge every ſlip or ſurpriſal as a cancelling of this my renewed Covenant. But poſſibly I diſtruſt my ſelf and fear I ſhall not do all I can, to ſtand: In this caſe to come to a ſhort iſſue, either I do reſolve for happineſs or not: If I reſolve not for happineſs indeed, 'tis no matter, whether I communicate or no; I am a perſon deſperate, who have given up my ſelf to Sin and Hell. If I do reſolve for happineſs, it is certain I muſt reſolve to exert my utmoſt might againſt every ſin, and eſpecially againſt ſuch to which I am moſt ſubject. And if I have ſo reſolved, but diſtruſt my own conſtancy to ſuch paſſed reſolves, I ſhall be willing and deſirous to uſe all means to enforce, enſure and (if it were poſſible) conſtrain my ſelf to conſtancy; and God hath not appointed, nor can I find out a more Soveraign means than this of the Lords Supper. I am therefore in conſcience, as I tender my own

own Salvation, to frequent it, and in caſe I ſhould yet fall again, to ſorrow more deeply for ſuch ſuppoſed future falls than ever, to reſolve and endeavour new amendment (as before conſidered in the practice of Repentance) to weigh with my ſelf what a ſad condition they are in, who have the abuſed blood of Chriſt to witneſs againſt them; from which eſtate there is no way in the world to reſcue me, but reſuming, with new vigor, my former good reſolutions, and freſh addreſſes unto that blood for pardon and ſtrength: Thus am I to perſiſt in that daily practice of repentance, and mortification, and uſe of all means, eſpecially this of this ſtrengthening Sacrament, as often as I have opportunity; to the end I may reſcue my ſelf out of this ſnare of the Devil. So that in fine, if this be my caſe I ſee my ſelf inexcuſably acceſſary to my own ruine, if I neglect this recovering Sacrament.

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Priv. Devot. Part. 4. Chap. 6. Sect. 4, 5.

Beſides theſe, I have great reaſon to fear there are other wants in

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in my ſoul, which oblige me to frequent communicating. I enquire therefore further.

3. Do I uſe to keep all my accounts ſo even with God, and my heart in ſuch a gracious frame, that I have not much need of that Ordinance, which ſhall bring me to ſuch righting my accounts (I mean to the ſtrict examination of my ſelf, touching new ſins, reforming for the future, and ſueing out the pardon of what is paſt) and to a more tender and heavenly temper of mind? Alas, is not there many a ſin which I fall into in my days, which paſſeth me unrepented! And as to all my private Faſting and Humiliations of my ſelf, have I not need of ſome efficacious means, to make me more ſtrict and careful, to deliver me from my uſual ſlightineſs and perfunctory performance of ſuch duties? Again, Doth not many a day paſs me, in which I have great reaſon to complain of the want of a due ſenſe of God, and my own duty, upon my heart? Do not I put up many a dull, and heedleſs

leſs and hard-hearted prayer? and must I not confeſs, that, as it is very ſinful and dangerous thus to live, with particular ſins unrepented of (or only careleſly conſidered) and with an heart very much void of an heedful fear, or eying of God, ſo that the Lords Supper is a very proper and effectual remedy to both theſe ſo dangerous and intolerable evils? Can I then impute either to frailty of my nature, and to common indiſpoſitions, incident from worldly buſineſs; if in the mean time I am conſcious to my ſelf of my neglect of that Divine Ordinance, which would reſcue me from both. I ſee then that that happy condition, into which preparation for this Sacrament would ſet me (of having matters ſtraiter in a good meaſure between Heaven and my Soul, by reaſon whereof I ſhould be fit for any thing, even death it ſelf) and that bleſſed frame of ſpirit, into which both preparation and the frequent participation of the Ordinance it ſelf would bring me, render

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render the neglect most inexcusable. Again,

4. Do I walk so innocently, and with such exactness observe the rules of Charity, as that I have no need of that holy Seal of Christian Communion, which I dare not come unto, till I have reconciled my heart to every man living, and to my power made satisfaction for every wrong I have done, and put an end to all unchristian contentions and animosities between me and others? Certainly my life is not so purely inoffensive, but I wrong many, if not by deed yet by words, or at least by uncharitable surmises and censures of them, and possibly too by secret ill will and grudge. And are these things either unnecessary to be rooted out; or am I so ready and diligent in the doing of it, and in further reconciling my self, and satisfying my offended Brother, that for this purpose I have no need of this Sacrament, which shall enforce me after a sort thereto?

5. Is

5. Is my Christian faith and hope so strong, my comforts and holy joys so firm and advanced, that I find not this Seal of my union with my Saviour and pardon of all my sins most necessary? Should a dangerous disease befal me, or my life otherwise be hazarded, have I a confidence of my future happiness strong enough to bear me up above the terrors of death, and to supply me with courage to endure whatever danger I may be brought into, even death it self, rather than seek an escape by any unworthy means? Rather, were I now to die, would I not miserably tremble, and doubt of my future estate? Were I stript of all earthly comforts, should I not be miserably dissatisfied, and unable to quiet my self, or meekly to endure the Gross with due *respect unto the recompence of reward*, of which I have not possibly such a well-grounded hope (much less such a certainty, perswasion and assurance) as it concerns me to provide, for the arming my self against all trials. And

Chap. 2. let me lay this to heart duly: If I come to be perplext with fears and doubts upon my death-bed, If I want courage, or behave my ſelf baſely in ſuffering, ſhall I not then, too late, a thouſand times blame and bitterly cry out of my neglect of this ſacred Ordinance? ſhall I not ſay, all I could have done had been little enough to ſupport my ſpirit, and be ready to ſink that I have been ſo regardleſs?

Laſtly: But ſuppoſe I have been ſo happy a man as to have behaved my ſelf ſo Chriſtianly in all theſe particulars, as that my conſcience accuſeth me not of any fault or defect (which I ſhall ſcarce find) either as to *unfaithfulneſs in holineſs*, or *neglectiveneſs of my great accounts*, *unmeet frame of ſpirit*, *uncharitableneſs*, *weakneſs of faith* and *hope*, yet I ſhall have need of this Sacrament to *keep me* in this ſo bleſſed a Condition. Certainly I have not, nor can have any aſſurance of my perſeverance, (which the word of God will warrant or not call wild and preſumptuous) with-

without my uſe of thoſe means, which the Goſpel ordained, as well for the continuance, as advance of me in grace. Chap. 2.

SECT. IV.

The ſum of all urged againſt the ordinary excuſes.

TO ſum up all then. Is the Lords Supper ſo great a priviledge, yea, even advancement to my nature? Was my Lord ſo paſſionately deſirous to have it inſtituted? Did he now dying ſtrictly charge me to eat thereof in *remembrance* of him? Doth the Church by her practice, command, and diſcipline, enjoyn and even force me to do it; and is the thing it ſelf ſo exceeding needful and beneficial to me, being a renovation of my Covenant with God, a confirmation of my vows, and a ſtrengthening me againſt all ſins; yea further, a means to place me in the full favour of God, and bring me to a moſt heavenly temper of

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mind, to renew, maintain and augment my charity, my faith, hope, and Chriſtian comfort, and a preſervative of me all my days; and can I abſent my ſelf from it at any time, when I have occaſion of receiving? Or if I once, or ſeldom abſent my ſelf from it, yet can I poſſibly live in the neglect of it? It is certain if I do, nothing of *reaſon, Chriſtianity, nor ſenſe of my own intereſt* can move me. Suppoſe Chriſt himſelf ſhould ſpeak from heaven (and ſo he doth by his word and Miniſtry) ſuppoſe when I turn my back upon that prepared table, he ſhould call to me from above, You Friend! *I died for you, I commanded you* when *dying* in *remembrance* of that my death, to eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, the benefit thereof is greater than you conceive; I have here commiſſionated my ſervants to give it you; here it ſtands prepared for you, my *Church commands, invites*, doth all poſſibly ſhe can to bring you to it; can you turn your back upon this body, this blood of mine?

mine? Is it nothing to you, that it was given for you? nothing that it is now offered to be given to you? Do you expect pardon, and grace, and life everlasting by the Sacrifice of it once upon the Cross, and can you neglect to partake of it here? What Answer could I make? Can I think in my conscience I should not be ashamed of making this? Lord, the Church professeth she thinks, that to receive it kneeling, is a reverence befitting so sacred a mystery. I think that reverence to be too much, (though there be neither express Scripture, nor evident reason for such my thoughts,) And, because I may not be so irreverent as I think fit, I will not come. In short: All objections I can make of things of this nature are either pure cavils, or matters very uncertain and disputable. The thing urged is a certain and undoubted duty: Now, am I just to my reason, or at all truly conscientious, if for *matters dubious*, (which (if the Church know more than I, as in good man-

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ners I am bound to think) are ſafe) I neglect ſo *undoubted, weighty* and *beneficial a duty?*

It can be no excuſe to me, that I come not becauſe I am not prepared, ſince to be unprepared is my ſin: and to ſay, I wanted time to prepare my ſelf, is as much as to ſay, I am not at leaſure to be a Chriſtian. I cannot therefore but ſee my ſelf in conſcience bound frequently to communicate, and it is fit I conſult how frequently.

CHAP. III.

How often a Chriſtian ought to partake of the Lords Supper, and at what age to begin.

NOW becauſe nothing can be done often, which doth not once begin to be done, therefore this Queſtion *how often* ought I to reſort unto the Lords Table, includes this alſo, (which it is meet be firſt anſwered) *How ſoon*

ſhall

shall I come hither, or at *what age?* Chap. 3.

To this the Orders of our Church seem to answer, at *Sixteen* years of age. But then, that passage is to be interpreted by others, which require that all persons now growing adult, be *confirmed* before their admission to the Lords Supper. So that the true answer to this Question depends upon the right understanding of *Confirmation*, of which briefly.

It is agreed by all sober men (though possibly otherwise of different perswasions) that there should be some solemn transition from our Infant-Membership to our adult, that is, from our being Christian Children, and as it were under age, to our being reckoned riper, and as it were Christians of our selves. To this purpose it is requisite, that being baptized in our infancy, when we could not personally take upon us the vow, and profession of Christianity, which was made in our names by others, we by our own choice openly take this vow

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and profeſſion on our ſelves. This the Church of *England* binds all to, in binding them to be confirm'd, as is evident by the Office of Confirmation; and after ſuch aſſumption of this profeſſion, and vow on themſelves (following therein pure and primitive antiquity) ſhe orders that they receive a Bleſſing from the Biſhop by impoſition of his hands, after which they are reputed adult Members, and have a full right to the Ordinances of the Goſpel.

According to the true intent of this wholeſom Order (whatever is practiſed contrary) though indeed we are not to reckon every Epiſcopal Benediction to be properly Confirmation, & ſo the intent of the Church is not contrariated ſo often as otherwiſe we might ſuſpect) every perſon to be confirmed, is ſuppoſed to have been ſo far inſtructed, *privately* by his Parents or God-fathers and God-mothers, and more *publickly* catechized by the Miniſter, yea, and taught to underſtand the words, and ſenſe of

of the Catechiſm, that he is in ſome competent meaſure, able to give account of his faith, not poſſibly by declaring it in a long formal oration, but by anſwering (as to the ſubſtance) ſuch few plain matters as are immediately requiſite to Salvation. And that this is the Churches intent, that all perſons come thus qualified to confirmation, both the *Rubrick* precedent, and the *Preface* unto the Office of Confirmation abundantly teſtifie. Now inaſmuch as till ſuch their Confirmation, and conſequently ſuch foregoing aptneſs, and underſtanding, young perſons are not to be admitted to the Lords Supper, it is evident that the mind of our Church in anſwer to this queſtion is in ſhort this; Every perſon, when come now to ſuch competent years of diſcretion, that he underſtands the main neceſſary matters of Chriſtian faith, (in which his own word is not to be taken, but trial to be made by the Governours or Miniſters of the Church) is to make a ſolemn Profeſſion of

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his owning the vow of his Baptiſm, and of Chriſtian faith in manner above intimated, and after this to be admitted to, and henceforth to frequent the Lords Supper. Now this the generality of people (ſuppoſing them Chriſtianly brought up, and inſtructed) may be well able to do *about ſixteen* years of age. *About* it, I ſay, for it is not to be thought the Church intended critically to inſiſt upon two or three or ſix Months in this behalf.

But in caſe at ſixteen years old, any are unable to give ſuch account of Chriſtianity, as mentioned, I ſee not that our Church admits them to confirmation, much leſs to the Holy Communion. Yet is it by the way, moſt juſtly enjoyned, that all of Sixteen, not communicating, be preſented, to the end, that if any of that age are not duly inſtructed, both they and thoſe who have, or have had the care of them, may be admoniſhed they ſuffer not their growing farther up in ſuch ignorance, and unchriſtian neglects.

Now

Now as to the *frequent iterations of* my addreſſes unto the Lords Table, by what I have above meditated touching the obligations which call me thither, I cannot but conclude, it is my duty to embrace *every opportunity*, which is given me: nor can I juſtifie any turning my back upon it, when God by his Miniſters invites me thereto: my unpreparedneſs is my fault, it can be no excuſe. True indeed, if unprepared, I may not in any wiſe preſume to come; but in caſe of my abſtaining, becauſe unprepared, I am to account and bewail that, as a double ſin; the one of neglecting the Lords Supper, the other of being in ſuch an unchriſtian temper, that I was unfit for it, and could not without venturing my ſelf upon damnation perform my Chriſtian duty. In moſt congregations at preſent, this Sacrament is ſo often adminiſtred, that all the Pariſhioners may partake thereof four times a year: but for my part, I ſee not how I can approve that mans ſpirit, who would

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Chap. 4. would be content with it eight times a year, if with convenience and order he could have it oftner: And I beseech God not to lay to the charge of this Nation the great neglects of this the chief of Evangelical Ordinances, and highest advancement of the Christian soul on this side Heaven.

CHAP. IV.

Considerations to move to such care, and seriousness in receiving, as that we may receive worthily.

THis the eminency and dignity of this holy Mystery now mentioned, is a fit consideration to move me to the greatest *care* and *seriousness* possible therein, which will preserve me from the second ordinary miscarriage of *inconsiderateness*, and consequently of *unworthiness*, at the Lords Table. For,

(1.)

(1.) Shall I be *heedleſs* and *vain in the higheſt*, and moſt heavenly Ordinance? Am I convinced that I ought not to pray to God, or hear his word with an unprepared, or inconſiderate mind, much leſs with a *heart regarding* inwardly *iniquity*: and can I tolerate ſuch a frame of ſpirit at the Lords Table? Doth the Prophet tell the houſe of *Iſrael*, that *every man of them, who ſet up his idols in his heart, and put the ſtumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and came to the Prophet, him* who thus came, *the Lord would anſwer according to the multitude of his idols, and take him in his own heart*, that is, him who came to hear from the Prophet with a corrupt and wicked heart, having not before laid aſide his beloved ſins, or ungodly intentions by an impartial reſolution of his duty (which could only turn *the ſtumbling block of his iniquities* out of his heart) him the Lord would entertain with all that diſpleaſure which belonged to all the multitude of his abominations? Was this

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Ezek. 14. 4.

Chap. 4. this the entertainment of such? how infinitely displeased then will he be at me if I come, not to receive his Word from his Prophet, but the body and blood of his Son with such an heart, as would provoke him not only in any meaner sacred action, but in my common life; and when to this my real ungodliness, and rottenness of heart, I at once add the greatest *presumption*, in daring to come, whither none but holy persons are invited, and the greatest *hypocrisie*, in pretending by such coming I am of the number of those, who have cleansed their hearts that they may be meet guests at so sacred a feast?

Further (2.) Let me take into consideration the vast *advantages* of having *worthily received*. It being supposed that I come with a meet heart, God by this Sacrament both *bestows* and *seals* to me all the *benefits of the Covenant of Grace*, and the blood of my Saviour.

Chap. 4.

The Benefits of worthy receiving.

1. He thereby gives me of his *Grace and Spirit*, the *true bread of life*, which feeds my ſoul to happineſs; that is, he really communicates to me a *ſupernatural ſtrength*, whereby I may be able, if I will make uſe of it, to reſiſt and overcome all temptations, to maſter all my luſts, to perform every duty of devotion to God, of Juſtice and Charity to my neighbour, and of temperance and ſelf-denial as to my ſelf; to perform all thoſe, I ſay, and that in a moſt lively and ſpiritual ſort; which I endeavouring to do, by exerciſe of this the grace of God, ſhall grow up in all Chriſtian virtues, and comfortably ſtill advance till *I come to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*: I ſhall be *as a tree planted in the Courts of God, ever green and flouriſhing*, and *full of fruit*: and being ſo, ſhall be the delight of Heaven, and joy of holy Angels, and a comfort to my ſelf all my days.

2. God further hereby makes over to me, and beſtows on me the par-don

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pardon of all my ſins, the merits of his Son, and a *full right to* be in his *Kingdom of Glory* a co-heir with him, to whom I am by this Sacrament moſt intimately united. As he gives me my Lords body, the ſpiritual Bread of his Grace to ſtrengthen my inward man, (as before conſidered) ſo alſo his blood, to waſh both ſoul and body from all original and contracted guilt, and to preſent them ſpotleſs, as that blood, in which they appear, before the throne of God: and being thus waſhed and purified, the merits of that blood are mine, even Heaven, and eternal life, which God hereby, I ſay, makes over to me.

3. This the body and blood of my Saviour myſtically and ſpiritually thus received by me, turns even to my very body a ſeed of immortality, and of reſurrection to eternal life. For, *As in Adam all died, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive*; and particularly it is by union with the body of Chriſt, yea, even while they ſleep in the duſt, that

1 Cor. 15. 22.

that the bodies of Saints shall enjoy an happy resurrection; and this union is by no means more intimately effected than by this Sacrament. And thus much the Christian Church hath from the Primitive days believed, *Ignatius* (whose Epistles came in the ancient Church next in authority to the Apostolical ones, as they did in antiquity) calls the elements thus received a *potion of immortality*, and *an antidote against death*, that is, against the power and final prevalence of it. Chap. 4. *In Epistol. ad* Ephes.

Lastly, as God hereby gives and makes over all those benefits, so he *seals* to the faithful heart this his gift, *ensures* and ascertains it as of his present giving the Spirit, and pardon to it, so of his future granting an happy resurrection, and eternal life: and what more firm and precious Seal can he set thereto, than this, that he makes us partakers of the body and blood of his Son, as a pledge of our being at present in his favour and love, and of our certain future being in his

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Boſom, and Kingdom? It is certain by the conſtant experience of all devout and ſerious Chriſtians that there is no means under heaven which fills them with more aſſured confidence of Glory, with higher tranſports of holy joys, and raviſhing comforts, than doth the due participation of this ſacred Myſtery. It gives them ſuch holy lifts to the throne of their glorified Saviour, whom they feed on, that they ſcarce know whether they are not there, and are ready to call out with that ſweet Singer of our *Iſrael:*

Mr. *Herbert.*

Give me my captive ſoul, or take
My body alſo thither:
Another lift like this would make
Them both to be together.

The conſideration of all which, as it ſhould beget in me an holy appetite and hunger after this heavenly chear; ſo it cannot, if duly conſidered, but make me very ſerious and devout in my approaches, inaſmuch as it is certain, all thoſe benefits are miſs't, and it is only an

an empty Feast, if I receive unworthily. Chap. 4.

But yet (3.) there is somewhat else which may further move me to the highest care herein; to wit, besides the *loss* of so great good, the vast, and almost unparallel'd *danger* of coming unworthily. There are two things which make dangers great; the *eminency* of the *evil* incurred, & mens obnoxiousness, or aptness to *incur* it; and both points are very considerable in the present case.

1. There is scarce in all the Scripture an expression which bears such a terrible import of certain damnation or judgment, as doth that of *eating and drinking damnation to our selves.* It would seem 1 Cor. 11. to intimate a mans having swallowed his own condemnation. And what sin, saving only the unpardonable sin, do we judge more hainous than the betraying and crucifying the Lord of life? What wretch like *Judas?* Now the Apostle in a manner placeth all unworthy receivers in a parity of guilt

guilt with him, when he ſaith, *Whoſoever ſhall eat this bread, or drink this cup unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.* Guilty, if not of the *crucifying afreſh the Lord of life, and putting him to open ſhame*, yet of *treading under foot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the Covenant, wherewith* only he can be *ſanctified an unholy thing*. The Chriſtian Church only believes touching this ſin, that by deep repentance, and amendment it is pardonable (that blood having of old healed even thoſe who ſpilt it) but that certainly it is a ſin of the higheſt nature, next to that of deſpite, or blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt. True, the guilt is greater or leſs, according to the knowledge and means, which the offending perſons have had to have prepared themſelves; but in all, certainly very great. And, as the danger is thus great, by reaſon the guilt thus incurred is ſo certain, and ſo grievous, ſo is it by reaſon of our *aptneſs to incur it*. What experience have I of the baſe

Chap. 4. 1 Cor. 11.

Heb. 6.6.

Heb. 10. 29.

baſe ſlightineſs and ſloth of mine own heart? how apt am I to ſlubber over Devotions, and to diſpenſe with lame preparation? And can I think the enemy, who continually watches to plunge me in the deepeſt guilt, will not be ready to help on my facility towards perſunctorineſs, when he is ſure it will involve me in ſuch wretched guilt? Conſidering this therefore, that I take the ready courſe to enſure mine own condemnation, if I come unworthily, and that partly of my own Nature, partly by inſtigation of mine enemy, I am prone thus to preſume upon my own ruine; ought I not to be awakened to the higheſt care and ſerioufneſs of devotion in this matter? Chap. 4.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

In what points that care *conſiſts, which he muſt take, who would be a* worthy *Communicant.*

BUT what care is that, which will ſecure me from this danger, and what are the particulars of that Devotion, which will render me a *worthy* Communicant?

In anſwer hereunto, it is certain, *Firſt*, that if I come not with a truly *penitent, faithful, thankful, and charitable* heart, honeſtly reſolved upon impartial endeavours of future holineſs, I come to this Sacrament unworthily; *care* therefore muſt be taken *beforehand* that I come with this *wedding Garment* to this ſeal of the *Eſpouſals* between my Lord and my ſoul.

And *Secondly*, it is as certain, that if I behave my ſelf with lightneſs, vanity, or indulged dulneſs; or

or in any ſort but with the intention, and height of preſent devotion, I behave my ſelf unworthily there. *Care* therefore muſt be taken that my mind be thus kept at home, and intent upon this heavenly Feaſt, *while I am there* to feed thereon. Chap. 5.

And *Laſtly*, It is no leſs certain, that if after reception hereof, I remit my diligence, and thinking now, as to all which is paſt, I have made even with God, begin to take to my ſelf more liberty of life, than what, before receiving, I could judge tolerable; or any otherwiſe grow heedleſs of my vows; I render my ſelf *conſequently* an unworthy receiver. *Care* therefore muſt be had of my *future carriage*, and ways, that they anſwer my engagements.

Now as to directions in all theſe points, they may be fetcht from that moſt excellent Book, *The whole duty of man*, where they are very faithfully and plainly laid down (A Book which he who writes this, Partit. 3.

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this, commends to his Readers ſtudy, as they love their Souls). Notwithſtanding, leſt every reader ſhould not have it at hand, and leſt the preſent work ſhould be more imperfect, brief conſideration ſhall be taken of each point; and Firſt, of what is fit to be done by way of preparation.

CHAP. VI.

Of more remote preparation: the Doctrine *of the Lords Supper briefly opened.*

IN order to my taking a perfect account what my particular preparation ſhould be for the Lords Supper, it is meet I conſider with my ſelf, whether I have formerly received it, or whether now at firſt I come thereto. And if I have formerly received, whether I now think in my conſcience, I then came thereto duly prepared or no. If I either now firſt come to receive,

ceive, or now first seriously set my self (deeply bewailing my former unworthiness) to endeavour approving my self a worthy Receiver, my *first care* must be that I *understand the doctrine* of this holy Mystery, which it will be most proper for me to fetch out of that good practical Book (containing the substance of Christian duties) which I am above supposed to have chosen to my self to read, and make my own. But if any have it not better and more at large, the substance of it is briefly this. Chap. 6.

All Mankind having sinned, and so forfeited that happiness which the first Covenant promised only to unsinning and perfect obedience, were in a state of present and future misery; when it pleased God, out of his meer goodness, to promise, and in fulness of time, to send us a Redeemer, who should bear our sins in his own body on the cross, and by his blood establish a new Covenant between God and us, on those terms, that if we would uniformly and impartially

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receive the Goſpel (that gracious rule of life) which he ſhould deliver unto us, yielding thereunto the obedience of Faith, and perſevering therein, this Faith, through the merits of our Saviour, ſhould be reckoned unto us for righteouſneſs, all our ſins, through the ſame his merits, ſhould be forgiven, plenty of grace be poured into our hearts, and a Crown of everlaſting life, which by his blood he purchaſed, ſhould be given unto us. And this, that we on our part might be able to fulfil, he not only in his own good time moſt clearly revealed what he required of us, preſſed with the moſt powerful motives and incentives to commend it to us, but ſent his Spirit both to incline, and enable us to what God, and our own happineſs, according to theſe terms, required of us. And that we might be aſſured, that he on his part would perform what he had promiſed, he appointed certain ſolemn and religious Rites to be obſerved by us, which as often as we

ſhould

ſhould come unto, we ſhould vow to do our part, and he, under our uſe of ſuch religious Rites, would both impart to us ſtrength to perform that our vow, and ſeal unto us our pardon of all that ſhould be then paſt, and of future ſalvation, the things which he on his part promiſed. Theſe religious Rites we call Sacraments: ſo that in ſhort our Church moſt fully and plainly defines a Sacrament to be, *An outward and viſible ſign* [or token] *of an inward and ſpiritual grace given* [or thereby conveyed unto us], *ordained by Chriſt himſelf* [ſo that it is not in the power of man or of the Church to ordain Sacraments] *as a means whereby we receive the ſame* (*viz.* whereby we receive the ſpiritual Grace, or Grace of Gods Spirit for the ſanctification of our hearts, and Pardon of all our ſins] *and a pledge to aſſure us thereof*, that is, of the ſaid Grace, in pardoning our ſins, and continuing ſuch his ſanctifying Spirit unto us. Or ſhorter; a Sacrament *is a Seal of the Covenant* of Grace; (1.) *on our*

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parts of the *Vow of Evangelical obedience*, and *(2.) on God's part* of his *giving* unto us his *Spirit*, the *pardon* of our ſins, *all things good* for us, and finally *eternal life*.

Of theſe *Sacraments* we acknowledge but *two* (becauſe Chriſt ordained no more, and no one ought to appoint Seals of the Covenant but he who made it.) The firſt whereof is *Baptiſm*, by which we vow obedience, and receive ſuch grace and pardon as mentioned. This Vow of our Baptiſm, foraſmuch as if we live to diſcretion, or active years, we through humane frailty and our own corruptions, and otherwiſe, break; there is a ſecond Seal or Sacrament, namely, *The Lord's Supper*, unto which acknowledging our breaches of our former Vow, we are to come, and *reſume* and *renew* our *Vow*; and God accordingly *renews* his *promiſe* of *grace*, and *pardon*, and *eternal life* unto us, and *communicates* further *ſtrength* for the performance of what on our part concerns us. The outward ſigns are Bread and Wine,

the

things ſignified, the Body and Blood of Chriſt: The breaking of the Bread typifies the breaking and rending of our Lord's Body on the Croſs: the pouring out of the Wine the ſhedding his Blood in his Crucifixion. Nor are his Body and Blood hereby only *ſignified*, but alſo *conveyed* to the faithful ſoul. So thoſe words of the Conſecration aſſure us, *This is my Body* *. Not this Bread is my Body; but this *taking and eating* is my Body; that is, (as the † Apoſtle St. *Paul* expounds it) the *Communion*, or participation of my Body. This Bread and Wine being bleſſed, and diſtributed according to his command, God doth thereby as truly convey and give to every faithful Receiver the *Body and Blood of Chriſt*, that is, *the crucified Saviour*, as the Miniſter gives him thoſe elements. As *truly*, I ſay, he gives him the crucified Saviour, *not bodily* but *effectually*: nor muſt we conceive the Body of our Saviour to move from its place, or come out of Heaven; but his body and blood is given un-

* *See Pract. Cat. Lib. 6. Sect. laſt.*

† 1 Cor. 10. 16.

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to us, and we receive them, (*verily* and *indeed* saith our Church) not in our *mouths* but *souls*, that is, we receive our Saviour as crucified, we receive our share of *right in his body and blood*, and all the *effects*, *powers*, *virtues*, *benefits*, and *fruits* thereof, especially those before mentioned, of spiritual strength, and pardon, and eternal life.

By this plain view of the doctrine of the Lords Supper, I cannot but see what I am to expect at the Lords Table, that is, I am prepared (in the Apostles language) to *discern the Lords Body*; and some light is given into what I must do by way of further preparation; for being I am to renew my Covenant with heaven, it first concerns me to *examine*, how I have broken it.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of more proximate Preparation for the Lords Supper.

THE particular and more immediate preparation for the Lords Supper, the Apoſtle calls *Examining a mans ſelf*. And the *firſt* thing, whereof I am to examine my ſelf, is, Whether I have knowledge ſufficient to *diſcern the Lords body*, that is, whether I underſtand the doctrine of it or no. If I do not, I ought to refrain till I have duly informed my ſelf; which I may not by any means long delay. (1.) 1 Cor. 11.

The next thing to be examined I already ſee to be, *my ſins*, the breaches of my Covenant with God. Now my examination of my ſelf as to theſe, is only in order to the endeavour of *godly ſorrow*, and that in order to *work repentance*. And the particular practice of all (2.)

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Pr. Devo. Part. 4. Cap. 6. Sect. 4, 5. 6, &c.

theſe I have above conſidered: thither therefore I am to return, and in the order laid down there, to endeavour ſincerely to ſue out the pardon of my ſins, (1.) *conſidering them*, and their *aggravations*, to move me to ſorrow & contrition for them; (2.) *ſtudying* how to *mortifie* (or break my ſelf of) the habits of them, (3.) *reſolving* upon the uſe of ſuch means as God directs me to; (4.) *endeavouring*, as far as poſſible, the making amends to any I have wronged; and to compleat all, (5.) betaking my ſelf to God in *Prayer*, by *confeſſing* and *bewailing* my ſeveral ſins to him, by *beſeeching* & depending upon him for pardon through the blood of Chriſt. All this I compriſe under the name of *Penitential Devotions*: and as the examination of my ſelf naturally leads me hereunto, ſo is this a part of preparation moſt indiſpenſably neceſſary for the Lords Supper, and for the performance of this, it is not to be thought an hour or two are ſufficient. It is very neceſſary, that before my firſt approaching to the Lords Table,

Table, I have for a good ſpace ſet up ſuch a weekly courſe of humiliation of my ſelf, as hath been above conſulted of, if my leiſure and condition of life will bear it. Then may I have particularly looked over my life, and underſtood my ſelf ſome conſiderable time beforehand, ſo that I ſhall not have my repentance wholly to begin, but only to review, iterate and further compleat.

Chap. 7. *Pr. Devot. Part 4.*

But if I cannot obtain of my ſelf or affairs ſo much leiſure for Devotion ſo long before, yet ſuppoſing I am now the firſt time to communicate, if I conſider the work I have to do, I cannot well begin to think of examining my ſelf and beginning my *Penitentials* later, than a fortnight before my intended receiving: Not that my devotion muſt take up the whole time, but that, being ſeveral and frequent times in examination of my ſelf, and if poſſibly keeping three or four Faſting-days (at ſome diſtance one from another) for this purpoſe of particular viewing my

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life, and distinctly considering, bewailing, confessing and resolving against my sins, I may be sure to have made thorough-work, to have repented of, and shut out of my soul all my known iniquities, and so be able with a clear conscience to approach this holy mystery. To this purpose (though I should commend it to all new Communicants, yet especially to such, who have less time and liberty for their devotion) do I commend *Easter* as the fittest time for first receiving, by reason of the *foregoing Fasts* of the Church; which whether all Families do observe, or no, it is certain that on some of them they are called to the *publick Service* of God, and particularly to confessions, and humiliation of themselves, and not suffered (the whole days at least) to labour. And these Fasts and days of publick Prayers in *Lent*, if the new Communicant observe, and in the serious fear of God deal plainly with his own heart, he may well be supposed, by *Good-Friday* at night, to have in a good measure

sure discharged the view of his life and Penitential Devotions. However I would so cast it, that the *Friday* before that Lords-day, on which I first communicate, I might have viewed and lamented the sum of my sins, and in my *Saturday Devotions* rather have my repentance to look over and more complete, than to begin, or a great part to do. Being then supposed to have *examined my self*, as to *my knowledge*, and *as to my sins*, and in my Penitentials to have endeavoured to make up all breaches between God and me, under which is comprised *reconciling my self* to my *offended neighbour* (as before said in the particular practice of repentance) the *next matter* of which I am to examine my self, (3.) which should be my work on *Saturday* evening, is the *present state and temper of my mind*; whether is that such as is fit to bring to the Lords Table? Now, that I shall know hereby: is my heart tender and affectionate, disposed to those Christian graces which I am there to exercise? *viz.* 1. To

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1. To repentance, to relentings for my ſins, purpoſes againſt them, and reſolves of holy life?

2. To humble dependances, truſt and hope in God through my Saviours blood for pardon?

3. To ſpiritual thankfulneſs, and holy joy?

4. To good will towards all men, to charity and liberality?

If I find my ſelf diſpoſed to theſe holy affections, I am in a fit temper to approach the Lords Table. If I find theſe diſpoſitions wanting, I am (1.) Seriouſly to bewail it. (2.) To look over my former preparations; poſſibly thoſe have been too ſlighty: ſome ſin may yet lie unrepented of, which hardens my heart; and if any ſuch I find, to repent of it particularly; if none ſuch found, (3.) an affectionate and tender temper is to be endeavoured by *Prayer*, *Reading*, and *Meditation*, Eſpecially, let me read and meditate the ſtory of my Saviours paſſion, reflecting ſtill on his Innocency, and my own Being of the guilty number, the puniſh-

ment

ment of all whose sins he bore. But if all will not melt my heart, it being supposed that all my penitential devotions by way of preparation have been honestly performed, let me not for this the hardness of my heart forbear communicating; Possibly the stone is so hard, nothing but my Saviours blood will soften it: To that therefore let me resolve to repair, yet not so as to intermit the use of any means, and especially of frequent Prayer, to dispose my heart in that holy sort, and to those holy affections above-named, which I ought to carry with me to the Lords Table. And here, though to hit the condition of every soul be impossible, yet it may not be unprofitable to consider of such a form of preparatory Prayer as may be fit for me on the *Saturday* evening, and *Sunday* morning, before I communicate, to add to my former devotions (which are not by reason of my having been frequent in Prayer to be remitted, but rather intended.) And such an one is this,

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O Father of Mercies, who from the beginning haſt been in Chriſt reconciling the World to thy ſelf, and to enſure as well as compleat this Reconciliation, haſt called the faithful to the Communion of the body and blood of him thy Son, that true Paſſeover, who taſted death for every man. With what holy hands, and with how pure and heavenly an heart, ought I to receive this the food of life which comes down from Heaven? Yet, Lord, how vile and polluted am I? my very preparations need repentance, and my tears ſorrow. And beſides the *inſufficiency* of my repentance (which I beſeech thee in the blood of Jeſus to pardon) I have other miſerable defects and diſtempers, which, Lord, if thou wilt

not

not remove, I am like to bring with me to thy Table. An exceeding *dull heart* I carry, very far unbroken for my ſins; unaffected too with that zeal of *love* and *thankfulneſs* towards thee, of *charity* and good-will towards Mankind, which I ought to bring thither with me. That *Truſt* and Dependance which I exerciſe on thy Mercy in Chriſt, I have reaſon to fear may be too preſumptuous. But, Lord, thou knoweſt I have endeavoured to mourn over, and repent of my ſins: I have *vowed* to have reſpect unto all thy Commandments, and not to regard any iniquity in my heart. Theſe my *vows* of Holy life, I have ready to ſeal at thy Table. Oh that thou by the blood and ſpirit of thy Son wouldſt *ſeal me* to the day of redemption, *pardoning* all my paſt ſins, and by

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by the power of thy *Grace*, ſecuring me from future backſlidings. Make this bleſſed Sacrament a feaſt of fat things unto my ſoul. Vouchſafe me thereby larger communications of grace and comfort than ever yet I received. And to that end, at preſent throughly *waſh me* from the guilt of all my ſins in the blood of my Saviour; from the guilt of all *I know*, and have confeſſed; and from the guilt of all my ſecret and *unknown* tranſgreſſions. O Lord, if there be any unſeen iniquity of mine, which is like to interpoſe and hinder good things from me, reveal and diſcover that to thy ſervant, that by ſerious repentance thereof he may obtain the waſhing of it away, and may draw near with a true heart, ſprinkled from all evil con-

conſcience. And, O good God, let thy Spirit go along with me, impowering me from above, and at thoſe inſtants when I ſhall receive that bread of life and drink of that cup of the New Teſtament in my Saviours blood, let my heart ſo relent for all my ſins, be ſo inflamed with fervour of holy reſolutions, of faith, love, gratitude, and moſt Chriſtian Charity, that I may in nothing behave my ſelf unworthily: Hear, O Lord, and remember thy ſervant for good, through that blood which he longs to be ſprinkled and ſatisfied with. *Amen.*

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One thing here let me admoniſh young Communicants of *(youth being hot, and more ready to vow than faithful to pay)* that *they do not through imprudent zeal intangle themſelves in too ſcvere and inconſiderate*

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ſiderate vows at the Lords Table. All known ſin muſt be reſolved and vowed againſt: all known duty reſolved for, and the endeavour of it, with utmoſt ſtrengh, vowed: Yea, the means of avoiding and mortifying ſin, (according as we have in our Chriſtian prudence conſulted of them) muſt be reſolved on. But here we muſt be wary, that by particular vows againſt ſome matters in themſelves innocent, we do not tie up our ſelves ſo ſtrictly from that liberty, which God hath left us (and we had better have ſtudied to have uſed Chriſtianly than vowed totally to abridge our ſelves of) that we either repent afterwards, or prove unfaithful to our vows.

But to return. Having with ſome ſuch Prayer as this above, cloſed up my evening Devotions, let me be very careful of my carriage afterwards, leſt I any wiſe diſturb ſo much as I have obtained of a good temper. To this purpoſe, let me order all my next dayes affairs (eſpecially if I have any command

mand or considerable service in a family) that my heart and hands receive as little disturbance or avocations by them as may be, which when I have done, let me chearfully commit my self to sleep with all convenient earliness. Chap. 7.

And as it is my duty constantly, and ought ever to be my care (as being of most wholesom and comfortable influence) to *sleep and wake with the thoughts of God* fresh and neareſt to my heart, so surely cannot I but think my self concerned at present to close and open my waking eyes with Divine thoughts and ejaculations: which if I do, I am now devoutly come to the morning of that day, on which I hope to receive the Sun of Righteousness into my soul, everlastingly to enlighten, cherish, and in the end, glorifie it.

With convenient earliness then I rise, and applying my self seasonably to my Devotions, in my morning meditations, I shall find thus much new, requisite to be added.

1. That

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1. That I consider afresh (for I am not now supposed first to do that, if I have practised the foregoing rules) how I may with due Devotion behave my self at the Lords Table, and what are those particular duties and graces, which there I am to exercise (of which again in the following Chapter.)

2. That I set apart and devote somewhat to be offer'd to God at the Lords Table for the use of the Poor, or maintenance of those who are not otherwise provided for. It is evident by Apostolick order this ought not to be omitted. * 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2. *On the first day of the week (viz.* * when they *assembled together to break bread) as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, so do ye. Let every one lay by him in store as God hath prospered you.* And this was of old so plentiful, that besides that it sufficed to make a feast, which they called a *Feast of Charity, or of love*, at which poor as well as rich, after the Lords Supper, refresht themselves (and

Comp. with Acts 20. 7.

Jud. 12.

of

of which we evidently read the abuſe in 1 *Cor.* 11. 20, *&c.*) it relieved poor Chriſtians, maintained the Miniſtry who were not otherwiſe provided for, and did many other publick goods. I ought not therefore either to do this too ſparingly, or in any wiſe to omit it if able. I am further Chap. 7.

3, To enquire afreſh into the temper of my heart, and, endeavour to bring it to ſuch due diſpoſition as before ſpoken of. And

Laſtly, To add to my morning Prayers in private, ſome earneſt petitions for the aſſiſtance of Gods Spirit, and a due frame of mind in participation of theſe holy Myſteries: in which caſe helps and directions have been above conſidered, and are to be uſed as I find it with my ſelf.

If after all this done, I have any ſpare time before my appearance in publick, I may well ſpend it in reading over the Communion-Service, (which if a young Communicant, I may be conceived not much vers'd in) by which means I ſhall

Chap. 7. ſhall be able with more readineſs, intelligence, and devotion to go along in it at the publick miniſtration. If I ſufficiently underſtand this, the reading the Story of my Saviours Paſſion, and all along applying, and (as I ought ever when I read it) reflecting upon my ſelf, as being one of thoſe guilty wretches, for whom he ſuffered all this, and who upon my honeſt faith ſhall have my ſhare in all the benefits and merits thereof, will be ſeaſonable and profitable employment for thoſe ſpare minutes and odd ends of time, which I have vacant.

Hitherto of the courſe of my preparatory devotions, ſuppoſing me now the firſt time a gueſt at the Lords Supper. My work will be much the ſame upon all my returns thereto: only, poſſibly I may not be able to ſpare, nor haply ſhall find it in ſuch ſtrictneſs neceſſary to ſpend, always ſo much time in the reviſing all my life, and particularly lamenting all my old ſins upon every return to the Lords Table.

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Inasmuch as, if I am duly careful after my first receiving, I shall observe some certain fixed time of calling my self to account of my carriage, and humbling my self for my miscarriages; and by that means be better verst in the particular knowledge of my ways, and keep all straighter between God and me. Notwithstanding, two *days* before my intended returning to the Lords Table it is very fit (though I am an old Communicant) I begin to think of preparing my self: one of which days I should be sure to keep as a Fast, and that with something more than ordinary solemnity; touching which, and my penitential work thereon, consideration has been above had. And as touching the rest of my preparations in bringing my spirit into a due temper, & disposing it to such Christian graces as I am to exercise at my receiving, I cannot be now at a loss after such particular consultation as hath been above entred, and is now proceeding with.

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CHAP. VIII.

Of Christian duties at the Lords Table.

IT remains now that having duly prepared my self in all the particulars above mentioned, (in none of which as I tender my soul and the benefits of worthy receiving, must I be careless) I consider so of my duties at this holy Table that no *misbehaviour here* render me unworthy.

Having devoutly (in the order * formerly propounded) gone through the foregoing service of God in the Church, (Prayers and Sermon) coming up now towards the Lords Table, I gravely take my place: and till the Assembly be all placed, it is far better for me to be upon my knees, and at my prayers, than to allow my eyes to gaze, and so my mind to wander.

* *Pr. Dev. Part.* 3. *Cap.* 8.

But

But the Prayers beginning again, it is very improper for me to be at, or proceed with any private prayers of mine own (which yet is too common, but a very indiscreet practice). Joyn I must with the Congregation, and particularly heeding every passage, put my heart thereto: And the contrary is reprehended as an intolerable disorder by the Apostle in the Corinthian Church: *How is it* (saith he) *brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, &c.* When one is singing, another is minding exhortations; another prayers, *&c. Let all things be done to edifying:* this then he thought an unedifying course: Yea, not only as to all the words and substance of the prayers and exhortations going before the Consecration of the Elements, but even to every passage and particular Ceremony in the consecration, let me, as neer as I can, keep my mind attentive; forasmuch as all of them have their meaning and reason, and do tend to edification.

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1 Cor. 14. 26.

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tion. Particularly the Sacramental actions on the part of the Minister, to be by me heeded and understood, are

1. *Taking of the bread and taking of the cup*, both used by our *Lord*, which are nothing else but a solemn separation of the Bread and Wine from common and ordinary use. Thus was the Lamb to be *taken out*, set apart *from the Flock*. And that which is signified hereby is Gods eternal setting apart and destinating the Lord Christ to this office of being our Saviour; in respect of which, he is called the *Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world.*

Exod. 12. 3.

Rev. 13. 8.

2. The blessing *the Bread and Wine*, represents God the Father, sanctifying and furnishing our Lord Christ, as to his humane nature, with all gifts necessary for the discharge of the office of our Redeemer: his blessing him *with the Spirit above measure.*

Of the breaking of the Bread, and pouring out of the Wine, the signification is obvious and above touched.

3. *The*

3. *The Bread and Wine thus taken, and bleſt, broken, and poured out*, are diſtributed to each by the Miniſter. *The giving* of them denotes Gods giving Chriſt, and Chriſts giving himſelf to us; and the particular *diſtribution* of them to each, the *particular reſpect* had of each, and the *particular application* of Chriſt unto each; and not of a piece of Chriſt to one, or a piece to the other, but unto each of the whole Crucified Chriſt, all the benefits and virtues of his Death and Paſſion. And further, As the Bread and Wine are not only given to us, but given to us with this deſign, that *we eat* the one and *drink the other*, ſo doth God give the crucified Saviour to us at preſent, whoſe *Fleſh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed*, for the *ſpiritual nouriſhment* of our ſouls and growth in Grace. Theſe are the Sacramental actions on the part of the Miniſter: Others there are on the receivers part; to wit, their *taking and eating*, and *taking and drinking*. Their *taking*, ſigni-

Chap. 8.

Joh. 6. 55.

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fies their particular *laying hold* on Christ by choice, trust and faith, their flying to, and apprehending him, as the means of their salvation, and of the pardon of their sins, and their dependance on him accordingly. *Their eating and drinking* signifies the close and intimate union of them to Christ; for as our meat passes into our substance, and is most intimately united to us, so are we hereby sealed and made, as it were, *flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone.*

All these matters ought I to be meditating, according as every particular gives me proper occasion, and the attending unto every particular passage, is that which is the proper devotion at this time required of me. Not so, but that I may and ought in the intervals of the office, to send up many ejaculations to God intermixt with these meditations, which I shall have the best opportunities for, while the Communion is administring to others. Then especially, if there be no Psalm singing, I may well recollect my

my vows & reſolutions of Holineſs, which in my private humiliations of my ſelf I have made and beg Divine grace, to enable me to keep them; and otherwiſe addreſs my ſelf to God, as my Chriſtian prudence and devotion ſhall ſuggeſt. But certainly to ſpend my time purely in private prayer, ſo as in their ſeaſon not to attend to theſe Sacramental actions, or the chief of them at leaſt, is very improper and diſorderly. Chap. 8.

In theſe exerciſes of my devotion in this order and method, am I ſuppoſed to wait till it comes to my turn to receive the *Holy Bread*, which when I receive, and am now feeding on, I employ my ſoul in ſome ſuch ejaculations as this.

Be it unto thy ſervant O Lord according to thy word.

I Bleſs thee, O Father, for my Saviour and Lord, the Holy Jeſus, I adore thee, O Lord Chriſt, with thine eternal Spirit,

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I acknowledg and believe thy body to have been crucified and broken by thy Father's wrath for me; beſeeching thee that through the ſame, this body of mine may be ſealed to an holy and eternal life; and withal, devoting my ſelf to thee by ſolemn vow, (which by eating here at thy Table, according to thy command, I ſeal) with all my ſoul and ſtrength to ſerve thee all my days. Let thy grace, O Lord, be ſufficient for me.

When I have now eaten, and during ſuch eating, thus applied my ſelf to God, it may poſſibly ſo come to paſs, that the generality of the Aſſembly is ſinging: if therefore the *Pſalm* be pertinent and ſenſe (for it is to be lamented many which are ſung in the Church are ſcarcely ſo) it is meet I joyn with them: if it be not, I ſee not how I can joyn with them any further, than by praiſing God in my mind, by

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by meditating in ſuch pertinent ſenſe as poſſibly the tranſlators of the *Pſalms* have corrupted. I am ſure God requires me not to praiſe him in what is not ſenſe, or ſo pitiful that my judgment cannot attend to, but nauſeate: nor doth our Church enjoyn it, the Metrical tranſlations of the *Pſalms* being only allowed and tolerated, not at all impoſed. I ſay therefore, I muſt be ſure to employ my ſoul in ſeaſonable holy Meditations of Chriſts ſufferings, the benefits thereof, of my union with Chriſt by this Sacrament, or the like: and thus meditating, wait till it comes to my turn to drink of that holy Cup: which when I take into my hand, that verſe of the *Pſalm* may well run in my mind, *I will take the cup of ſalvation, and call on the name of the Lord:* and, as far as I can, while I drink, however, moſt ſurely when I have drunk thereof, let me ſomewhat more at large lift up my ſoul to God in ſome ſuch ſort as before.

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Lord let the Blood of Jesus cleanse and Sanctifie me from all Sin.

After this I pause a while, reflecting a moment or two, how all has passed over with me, inwardly exercising an humble confidence or hope that God accepts me, sprinkled with my Saviours Blood, and that he does and will perform his promise of Pardon, Grace and Glory: and then as I find occasion or have opportunity, I add,

I Bless thee, O Almighty Father, O crucified Saviour, O sanctifying Spirit, that my soul is thus refreshed. I acknowledge and believe thy blood, O Holy Jesus, to have been shed for my sins; let it rest on me for remission of them, and therein let all sins be washt away, and I sprinkled from all evil conscience. Being now made

made clean, O, that I may ſin no more! Chap. 8.

Having thus received, in caſe of ſuch *Pſalm* ſung, as before allowable, I joyn therein; otherwiſe I employ my devotion as I did after my partaking of the bread, till all having received, the Church prayers afterwards begin; in which with the utmoſt fervency of my ſpirit, I praiſe and petition God. And though I ſhould not, before theſe, have * *ſung an hymn*, yet do not I depart from the Lords Table without a very Seraphical *hymn*, if I devoutly joyn in the Church prayers: for ſuch is that which is ſung or ſaid after the adminiſtration, *Glory be to God on high, &c.* Matth. 26. 30.

Before I depart from the Lords Table, I muſt be ſure to *make my offerings* (it ought to be indeed regularly in all Congregations, and is in many done ſoon upon the Peoples addreſſing themſelves to Communicate). I mean, to leave ſomewhat for the refreſhing of the poor, as a pledge of my gratitude

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to him, who hath thus fed my hungring and thirſty ſoul. Having thus done, I depart, prayers being ended, with a ſerious and chearful heart, and countenance; I keep good thoughts in my mind, yet paſs not ſo reſerved, but that I cheerfully ſalute any of my *Chriſtian brethren*, as I have occaſion; remembring in the ancient Church, the Aſſemblies, eſpecially after every Communion, parted with an *Holy kiſs*. Very ſeaſonable may it be, and a right charitable imitation of the old feaſts of *Love*, *to invite* any poor communicants home to my Table, if I have one; for home now I haſten.

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CHAP. IX.

Of duties more immediately and remotely following the reception of the Lords Supper.

AND when I am now come home, I forthwith retire to my privacy for a ſmall ſpace, where my buſineſs is *Inquiry* into my ſelf and ſuitable *addreſs* to Heaven.

Two or three things there are, touching which, I cannot but think my ſelf obliged to *enquire*; (1.) Touching my own behaviour, both at the Lords Table, and ſince my immediate departure thence. Was I ſo *attentive* and devout, as I reſolved and prayed I might be? Or was I *heedleſs* in many points, and generally *dull* and unaffected? And ſince I came from thoſe devotions, have I not by indulging wandring thoughts, or vain and worldly diſcourſe, already;

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dy loſt much of the benefit I obtained? (2.) How ſucceeded all between Heaven and me? What found I of the *quickening* or *comforting* influence of the Holy Ghoſt? This is that, which they, who mean any thing intelligible thereby, mean by *Communion with God*, conſiſting in nothing elſe but a mutual entercourſe of action, between the *mind* of man worſhipping God in Faith, Love, and ſuch like acts of adheſion, and *God* enlivening and affecting it, with the aſſurance of hope, with holy joys, and a ſenſe of his acceptation, love and favour. The *mind* flies out to him by Heavenly temper, thoughts and deſires, and he by *his ſpirit* not only heightens that devotion, but fills the mind with hopes and confidences, that its devotion and it ſelf are accepted, and with joys thence conceived; which, according to the devotion of the mind, are higher or more moderate, ſometimes *unſpeakable and full of Glory*. Touching this ſucceſs, I ſay, I muſt enquire, and if upon enquiry made, I find my,

my ſelf to have been dull, and to have felt little or nothing either of the quickenings or joys of the Holy Spirit, I am (3.) to examine the cauſe, for undoubtedly it lies on my ſide; I was either *ſlighty* in my *preparations*, or *heedleſs* in my *participation*, or elſe there is ſome other diſtemper in mine heart (perhaps yet unſeen by me) which cauſeth God to keep at a diſtance, and as it were eſtrange himſelf. Suitable to what I find concerning my carriage, ſucceſs, and preſent ſtate, ſhould be my addreſs to Heaven; which (though haply, by reaſon of common affairs, neceſſarily ſomewhat brief, yet,) ought to be as affectionate as may be. Poſſibly, the following form may not be unfit (if for uſe, yet not) for direction. Chap. 9.

MY ſoul and all within me bleſſeth thee, O Lord my God, for that bread of life, and cup of ſalvation from which I now come. What am I that thou

Chap. 9. thou ſhouldſt feed me from Heaven, and aſſume me into ſo intimate an union with thine Eternal Son? I, who have tranſgreſſed all thy Laws, abuſed thy Mercies, ſlighted thy Judgments; I, who have refuſed thy Calls, reſiſted thy Spirit, broken all my former Covenants with thee: what am I that thou ſhouldſt thus readmit me into ſo high favour? It is, O Lord, becauſe thy Mercy is above all thy Works, and the riches of thy Grace moſt inexhauſtible: that Mercy and Grace I adore, I admire; Oh, that I may Eternally magnifie! Nothing is there, Lord in me, but what may provoke thy wrath, and hinder my happineſs. How * groſs was my unpreparedneſs for thy Table? How many the * wanderings, and how * great

the:

the dulneſs of my heart, even under my neareſt approaches to thee there? Theſe may juſtly hide thy face from me. And I cannot but bleſs thee, that thou haſt not more eſtranged thy ſelf, and inſtead of hopes of thy favour, ſent me home with a ſenſe of thy wrath. But, Lord, though I am not worthy [* *and have not taſted ſo highly*] of thoſe joys and comforts, of that hidden Manna, which thy choice and holier Servants taſte, yet vouchſafe me this benefit by the communion of the Body and Blood of thy Son, that I may receive ſuch grace and perpetuated influences of thy Spirit, as may enable me to perform unto thee all my vows; ſo that I never, by revolting into any known ſin, unhallow this ſoul and body of mine, which the Body and Blood of thy

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* *Such expreſſions as theſe, are to be uſed, as they are found to ſuit with the particular condition of the worſhipper.*

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thy Son hath this day ſanctified; but denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, may live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily in this preſent world, and in that to come, obtain a bleſſed reſurrection, and ſome (though any mean) ſhare of an inheritance with thy Saints in light, through the merits of my crucified Saviour, *Amen.*

Having in ſome ſuch ſort, ſuitably to my condition, addreſt my ſelf to God, I have cloſed for the preſent my Communion-devotions, and it only remains, that in all my ways hereafter, I remember my renewed Covenant, as judging it grievous to violate any one Article of what I have ſealed in my Saviour's blood, and to have that abuſed blood (through which only I can have pardon) to be a witneſs againſt me. It is certain, that conſequent unworthineſs (that is, behaving our ſelves unworthy, forgetful

getful, and regardleſs of the Body and Blood of Chriſt, after we have partaked thereof) is moſt dangerous: for he, who after his partaking ſhall from his heart endeavour to live worthy, was not, undoubtedly, an unworthy Communicant; ſo that *future fidelity* to my engagements, I cannot but look upon as the *moſt critical point*, which *conſtitutes* me *a worthy receiver*. This therefore I muſt daily mind, and with all my might endeavour; and very much conducing hereunto I ſhall find theſe practices. Chap. 9.

1. That I frequently recollect my engagements and vows to God, to the end forgetfulneſs betray me not to the breach of them. To this purpoſe it were very well, if (according to ſome former Propoſals) I kept them in writing.

2. That I carefully maintain a conſtant courſe of daily devotion, (ſuch as above deſcribed) and be ſure therein to imploy my heart as well as lips; and, if poſſible, dai-

ly,

Chap. 9. ly, at leaſt frequently, examine my Conſcience. This will keep in my heart a ſenſe and fear of God, and beſides, derive his grace and bleſſing on me.

3. That I carefully watch and provide againſt, and endeavour throughly to mortifie that ſin or ſins, to which my natural conſtitution or courſe of living is moſt apt to betray me, and by which I have formerly moſt foully fallen. Hence is the greateſt danger to be feared: here therefore ſhould be kept the ſtrongeſt guard.

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CHAP. X.

Whether a Chriſtian may not worthily *communicate without obſervation in ſtrictneſs of the* former Method. *Some reflections on* dying mens communicating, *and concluſion of all.*

AFter this particular conſideration of worthy receiving the Lord's Supper, the rules laid down being ſtricter than what moſt obſerve, it may poſſibly be demanded whether a Chriſtian may not communicate worthily, although he ſhould not obſerve all theſe rules, eſpecially as to the ſtrictneſs of preparation, and the quantity of time to be ſpent therein.

In anſwer whereunto it muſt be Premiſed, (1.) That the ſpiritual eſtates and ordinary lives of men are various. The generality of men ſpend very little time in daily

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daily private devotion. And even all thoſe, that accuſtom themſelves to daily private Prayer, uſe not haply much to examine their own hearts, and take a daily account of their walkings, ſo as to confeſs; and ſue for pardon, for every ſin they ſee themſelves that day to have fallen into. Others on the contrary ſide maintain generally ſuch ſtrictneſs in their private devotions daily. And again (2.) There is difference between coming occaſionally a gueſt to the Lord's Table, when I did not long before intend it, and coming in my ordinary courſe, when I had a weeks notice of it, and intended to come ſo long before. Occaſional communicating I call that, when being *abroad on a Lord's day*, or ſome like ſolemn day, I come into a *Congregation* by me well enough known, and there find the Table prepared, and hear all, who are fit to be gueſts, there preſent invited to it: or, when being in the *Family* with ſome *dying* or decrepitly *infirm perſon*, I am invited upon

upon ſhort warning, to make one of that number which are to communicate with him. Chap. 10.

Now for ſatisfaction to the caſe put, I ſay, it being ſuppoſed I am a perſon who maintain ſuch a ſtrict courſe of daily private devotion, as above deſcribed, it cannot be, but that I am well acquainted with my own heart and ways; and there can be little on my conſcience to detain me from the Lord's Table. In ſuch a caſe then it is evident I carry about with me, in a manner, an *habitual preparation*. If therefore I, by a ſhort meditation (to which purpoſe, in caſe there be any tolerable convenience, I retire, otherwiſe, I call my *ſoul* as as it were into *private*, and *commune with mine own heart*) if I ſay by a ſhort meditation I look into my ſelf, and finding nothing but that my breaſt is clear, after ſome brief addreſs ſecretly to God to diſpoſe my heart for what I intend, I may undoubtedly approach the Lord's Table in an acceptable ſort: provided I omit nothing of the

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the ſtrictneſs of that care which I am to take in the *act of receiving*, nor, of *after-fidelity*. And indeed I do not know, did men live ſo Chriſtianly as they ſhould, how a Chriſtian can as I ſaid before, turn his back upon the Lord's Supper, whenſoever he hath conveniencies for it, without a ſinful neglect. And if men do not live ſo Chriſtianly as they ſhould, I think no one will doubt, but that again is a ſin: ſo that generally the turning my back upon the Communion, except it be to leave room for others, or becauſe ſome other Chriſtian duties at that time call for me, muſt be concluded ſinful; and ſinful it is too not to live in ſuch an habitual preparation, that, upon occaſion, after ſome, communing with my own heart, I could not ſafely approach thereunto.

But it muſt be remembred, this is only allowable in grown Chriſtians, and men of ſtrict devotionals; and in theſe two, rather in their occaſional, than ſet and long intended

intended communicating. To others, or to theſe in their ordinary courſe of receiving in their own Church, I ſcarce can judg the former directions of inquiring into themſelves a day or two before hand, of faſting and humbling themſelves, and taking pains duly to diſpoſe their hearts to the higheſt pitch of devotion, may be omitted without ſin.

Touching what devotions will concern a dying man in order to his communicating, it may not be unexpedient to add ſomewhat; but I had rather conſult more generally, touching what preparations for death that man ſhould make, who had formerly in his life for a good ſpace obſerved the courſe propoſed, both in the foregoing tract of devotion, and this of communicating.

And for a concluſion to the whole, and by way of commendation of this Method to the practice of all who read it: I will ſay that in caſe a man have carefully and conſcientiouſly practiſed the fore-

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foregoing Method, whether he be taken on a ſudden by death (from which ſudden death I never thought it improper to ſay with our Church, *Good Lord deliver us*) or more ſlowly ſummoned and conveighed to his Grave by diſeaſe; he hath little to do by way of preparation for death, but to continue his former practice.

Sudden death allows little time, but to call ſomewhat generally for Mercy and Pardon, and with ſorrow (as particular as may be) for ſin, to caſt my ſelf on God through Chriſt. *Death*, when it gives warning, calls me to the fulleſt and ſtricteſt practice of *repentance* and *faith* I can, which has been before conſidered. This then, if I have before conſcientiouſly practiſed, home to the time when diſeaſe or other accident ſummons me, I am an happy man; for I have little work to do, but to beg my ſincere repentance may be accepted, and to reſt in a comfortable hope, that through my Saviour's merits it will be. This *hope* often fled unto,

will

will *overcome the terrours* of death. In caſe my diſeaſe be any whit lingring, the reviewing and making ſure my repentance is of irrefragable neceſſity: nor ſhould I by any means omit the *Communion*. Chap. 10.

But before my participation thereof (ſuppoſing my diſeaſe, I ſay, ſo patient) I would, if poſſibly; ſet *my houſe in order*, that is, diſpoſe of my Eſtate, Concerns, and Truſts, and in diſpoſing hereof, if I have it, it behoves me to give with due *liberality* to the poor, no man alive having been ſo juſt a *Steward*, but he hath need by gratifying the poor, to obtain their prayers and bleſſing, that his *waſting his Lord's Goods*, may not hinder his being received into the Erevl-ſting Habitations of bliſs. Luk. 16. 9.

This work of *diſpoſing my Eſtate*, though it ſhould not begin my more immediate preparation for death, (renewings of my repentance, being ſuppoſed firſt of all to take up my mind) yet ought to be *early diſpatched*, in as much

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as my mind will be freer for Divine contemplation and devotion, when I have taken leave of worldly buſineſs.

This then being over, I, more ſolemnly I ſay than ever (as far as my power admits) reviſe my repentance, caſt over the ſins of my life, beg pardon through Chriſt, and ſo prepare my ſelf (as formerly in my health) for this *cloſing ſpiritual Meal* of my Lords laſt Supper. In this caſe, I muſt by no means neglect to conſult with ſome *ſpiritual Guide*, to whom if I have nothing to unburthen my ſelf of, yet I apply my ſelf to, to receive *abſolution*: the expreſs words and commiſſion of our Saviour, and the conſtant practice of the Church, being an irrefragable proof that there is weight in that matter, though not ſo much as ſome pretend.

John 20. 22, 23.

Having therefore ſet all, as far as I can, ſtreight not only in my own judgment, but in the judgment of that Miniſter with whom I conſult;

ſult; it is fit (all meet circumſtances admitting it) I proceed to partake of the Lord's Supper, before which according to the order of the Church, I receive abſolution. I have here little or nothing purely new, being to proceed by my former rules; only I am to endeavour to raiſe my devotion to the higheſt pitch. Chap. 10.

The whole office being over, in Divine and *Heavenly thoughts*, diſcourſes and prayers, ſhould I, as comfortably and gladly as I can, await my diſſolution. During this expectancy, and poſſibly again, as near my dying moment as I can, ſhould I ſolemnly *commend all mine to God*, by *invoking the bleſſing* of God on them, and *counſelling* them the beſt I can to virtue: and above all, I would preſs the ſerious practice of Religion upon them. (Mens dying words ſtick longeſt, and he is ſtrongly Atheiſtical, who will not be moved with a dying mans aſſerting and urging the reality of Religion.) *Thus,*

Chap. 10. *Lord, if thou pleaſeſt, grant I may ſhut up my days!*

To conclude, Know, good Reader, who lives well, is generally prepared for death. Who comes to the Lord's Table otherwiſe prepared, than he would go out of the world, is not prepared to the degree he ſhould be; which Doctrine if duly conſidered ſhould not deter or detain men from, but excite them to frequent communicating: for thus they will live conſtantly prepared for death; which is certainly the moſt bleſſed life.

The former Treatiſe of Devotion, if truly practiſed, leads to an holy and ſtrict life: the preſent to due preparation for the Communion of the Body and Blood of Chriſt; ſo that he who will addict himſelf heartily to this practice, will undoubtedly prove an holy perſon, will live prepared for all which can befall him, even death it ſelf: and him, whom ſuch an happineſs, as to be a real Saint, ready to paſs hence into Eternity of bleſſed-

bleſſedneſs, free from all harms, dangers, and fears forever, will not move to a practice, in it ſelf ſo amiable, ſo pleaſant, ſo advantageous, I can only ſay, *The Lord have mercy on*: but he hath nothing in himſelf ſave his miſery, to commend him to that mercy: And whether his guiltineſs will not obſtruct mercy, let him look; I ſhould not dare to run ſuch hazard. Chap. 10.

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